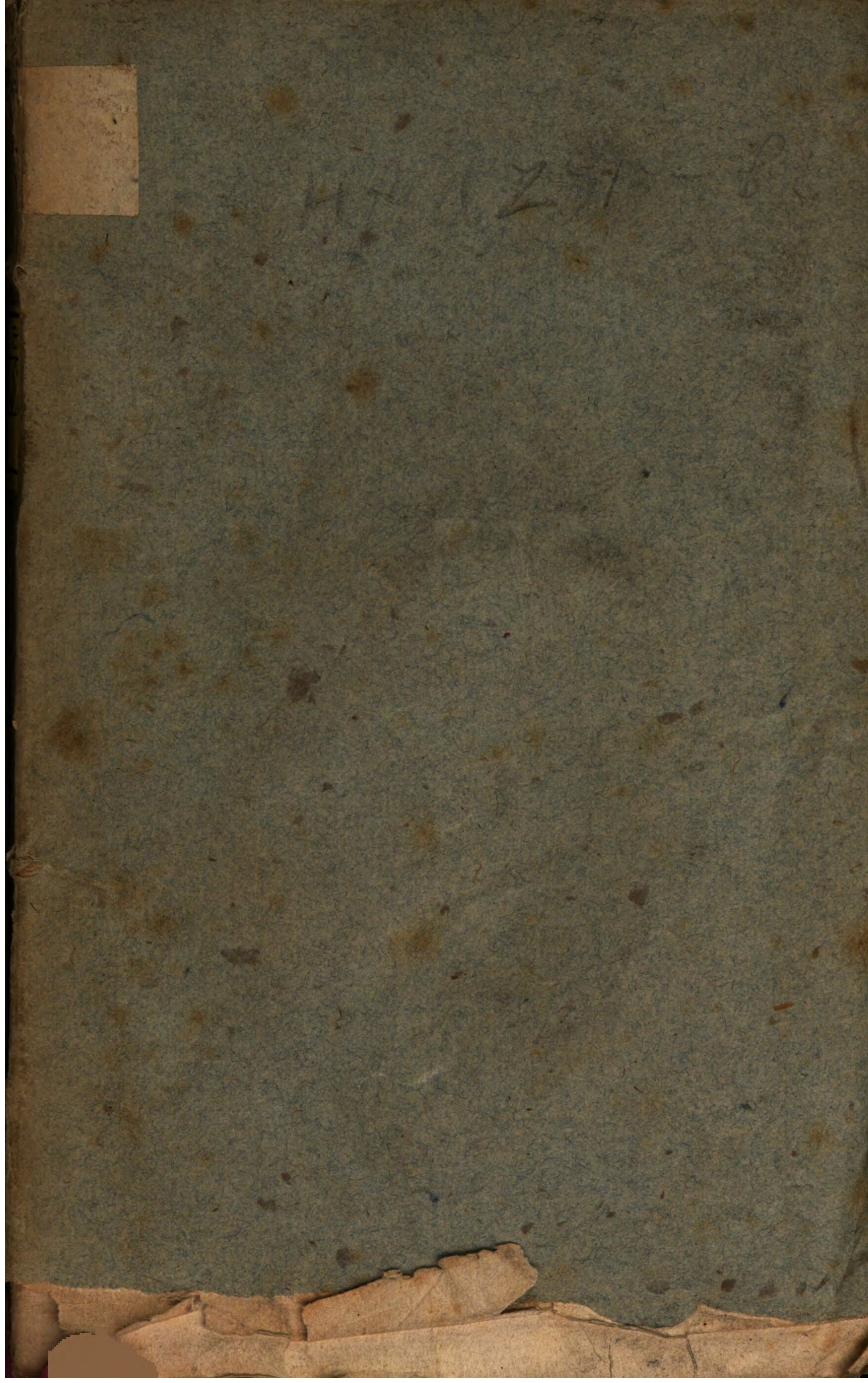




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THE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
R E I G N

OF
HENRY THE SECOND,

AND OF
RICHARD and JOHN, his SONS;

With the EVENTS of the Period, from 1154 to 1216.

In which the Character of THOMAS A BECKET is vindicated
from the Attacks of GEORGE LORD LYTTETON.

Ut nihil nimie, nihil nisi verè dicatur.

WIL. MALM.

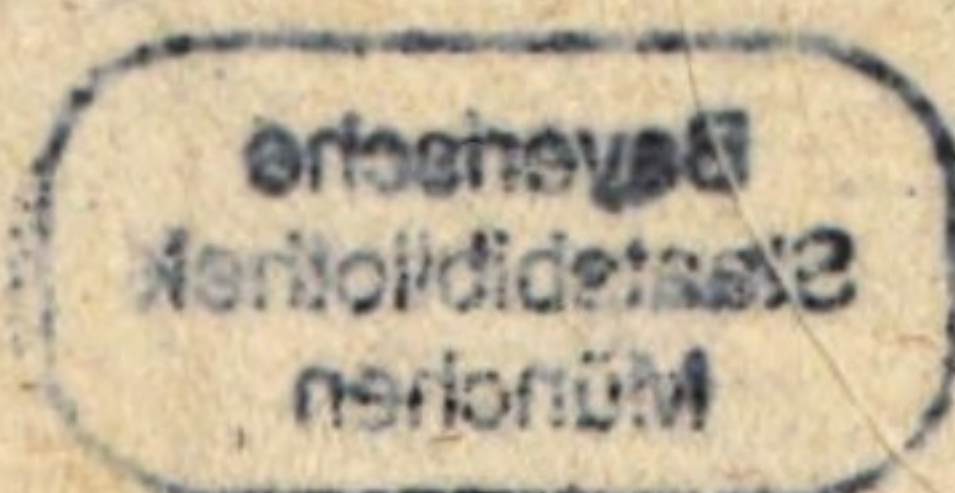
By the Rev. JOSEPH BERINGTON.

VOLUME I.

BASIL:

Printed and sold BY J. J. TOURNEISEN.

MDCCXCIII.



THE
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Unpublished, until now very scarce.
WILL. MALE.

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MDCCLXXXIII

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München

T O
The Right Hon. CHARLES
JAMES FOX.

SIR,

JUST emerged from the view of times, to which modern vanity has imputed a peculiar darkness, it was natural, I should turn my eyes to the living characters of this island, that, by comparison, I might establish their relative excellence, weighing manners with manners, and men with men. That the result was favorable to my own days, it is unnecessary to say. Yet then there were statesmen of great political sagacity; patriots to whom their country was dear; soldiers who nobly fought her battles; and churchmen of disinterested virtue. The candor of your mind will readily admit more than this. And where I have exhibited the imperfect

state of things, particularly of our political government, I trust, your knowledge of the subject will justify the statement, and clear me from the charge of an unfounded theory.

It is on Runnemedede, Sir, that I wish to meet you, the sacred field of liberty! And if you but approve the spirit with which I led the barons to it, I shall think my labor has been repaid. But whatever may have been my enthusiasm, I was patient, I know, in the inquiry, and accurate to a scrupulous precision. On that spot, where the language of flattery would not find utterance, I shall be permitted to say, that there lives one modern patriot at least, in competition with whom, the barons of those days were but puny men. Nature endowed him with splendid talents, and blessed him with a heart, comprehensive, generous, manly, and sincere. His talents

D E D I C A T I O N. v

he gave to his country , and his heart to his friends. Animated by a laudable ambition, and the love of generous praise, we have seen him the darling of the people ; and, as the tide of royal favor flowed, we have seen him in the possession of power, and sharing in the duties of a mighty empire. But neither to power, nor party, nor wealth, nor the smiles of favor, have we seen him sacrifice the great interests of honor and integrity. True to this level, he deemed no preferment worth the surrender of character ; or thought that the fame of a statesman stood in need of insincere professions , and the frothy testimonies of duplicity. On a late occasion, when it was vainly clamored that danger threatened the constitution, we beheld that same patriot, solicited even by those who had been his enemies, come forward the avowed champion of unrestrained

toleration, and of the sacred rights of conscience.

It has, for some time, been the fashion with courtiers, and with priests, and with men of irritable minds, whom some jealousy, perhaps, has warped, to decry the politics of France, as originating in the basest designs, and as supported by measures, which tyranny only, and the worst passions of the heart can patronize. This is not the language of cool discernment, which weighs the process of events while they proceed, through inevitable confusion and the strife of jarring interests, to a consummation, it may be presumed, that shall secure the rights of men, break the arm of despotism, and give liberty to millions. The darkness which clouds the view will be dissipated, as the teeming plan shall be developed. But this may be asserted, that, had the counsels of such men be listened to as I have

mentioned, the mad career of John had never been resisted; no Magna Charta had graced the annals of the thirteenth century; and the constitution of these realms, by bold and reiterated efforts, had not yet been formed. We are in possession, Sir, of your sentiments, ever dictated by the same free, unvarying, and comprehensive views.

But even in this island, Sir, exists a proscribed society, whom neither popular hatred, nor the malevolence of bigotry, nor the rigor of persecuting statutes, have been able to annihilate. Their ancestors were the men who once brought glory and freedom to the land; their principles grew with its growing greatness, cementing the political fabric as it rose; and their church was, for ages, as it is now styled, its essential and indissoluble partner. This society, as the storm, they trust, is over, looks ardently to the restora-

tion of their rights, and to the common privileges of men. But they are withheld; and a wretched policy still dictates, that the prosperity and strength of Britain shall depend on the disunion of its members, and that partial favors shall best secure the good-will of all. Sir; it is reserved, perhaps, for you, when the country shall again possess your services, to remove the stain of intolerance from her name, and yourself to become, what to a great mind is the noblest triumph, the protector of the oppressed, and the restorer of the insulted honor of the English Catholics.

With the greatest respect,

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

And humble servant,

JOSEPH BERINGTON.

Oscott, near Birmingham,

April 6, 1790.

P R E F A C E.

THE *History* I now offer to the public, may be considered, in one sense, as a continuation of the *History of the Lives of Abeillard and Heloisa*, which I published in the year 1787; for the general events are connected, and proceed uninterruptedly from the close of that period. At the end of the *Preface* to that work, I said: “ My
“ history breaks off at a most brilliant and im-
“ portant epoch. It is, when Henry Plantagenet
“ had just mounted the throne of England, when
“ his dissensions were soon to begin with Becket,
“ when Frederic Barbarossa was in Germany,
“ when Alexander III. was at Rome, and when
“ the general aspect of Europe seemed to promise
“ events, great and interesting. The period has
“ already been ably treated; but should the pub-
“ lic favor encourage me, *perhaps* I may be tempted
“ again to review it.” The public favor did encourage me, and I prosecuted my design. But I could not then calculate the labor that would attend it. However, in my former researches, hav-

ing acquired some knowledge of the manners and of the general character of the times, I was not in the forlorn situation of a traveller who is thrown on a distant land, to whom the language of the inhabitants, the country, and all its ways, are strange and inextricable. My sources of information, besides, were ample.

In reading the History of Henry II. as given by modern writers, I had, many years before remarked, with what asperity they spoke of Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, and of his controversy with that king. I likewise knew, how highly, at the same time, the character of that prelate was venerated in my own church. That truth was never found in the extreme of any question, I was aware; and it was my wish to bring the subject to a fair discussion, and to be just. If I have not been so; some untoward circumstance of my mind, which I could not command, has led me into error.—Sometimes I have been sorry, that I had not confined myself solely to the life of Becket. I could then have taken a wider view of it, and have brought forward, in so short a period, many incidents and anecdotes,

which would have thrown additional light on the times. But the greater events of history coalesce better with kings and statesmen; and as they, to the neglect of more interesting materials, have filled the pages of our ancient writers, we collect them with less labor. — Having completed the reign of Henry, in a much shorter compass than I had expected, the natural connexion between him and his sons led me on to the two succeeding reigns. And the concomitant characters and events of the period, as far as I could admit them, served, all along, opportunely to break the narration, and to relieve it. I must now acquaint my reader with the sources from which I drew.

On the affairs of England, I consulted William of Malmſbury, William of Newborough, Ralph de Diceto, Gervase of Canterbury, Roger de Hoveden, Girald of Wales or Cambrensis, Geoffrey Vinſauf, Matthew Paris, the Chronicles of Mailros, and of Walter Hemingford, and the Annals of Margan, of Burton, and of Waverley.

William of Malmſbury, a monk of that abbey in *Wiltſhire*, lived under Henry I. and Stephen. *William of Malmſbury.*

Of his life little is known but what himself has recorded: but his writings, by their elegance of style and accuracy, have given immortality to his name, and rendered it dear to the lovers of English history. Robert, earl of Gloucester, the natural son of that Henry, and the Mécenas of the age, was the protector of this learned monk; and to him he dedicated his two principal works. "Which," says Leland, "as often as
" I take into my hand, I am compelled to
" admire the diligence of the man, whose
" reading had been vast; the felicity of his
" diction, which could imitate the best originals;
" and the soundness of his judgment". His general history of England (*De Gestis Regum Anglorum*) is in five books, from the arrival of the Saxons, in 449, to the 26th of Henry I. 1126: his modern history (*Historiæ Novellæ* in two books, from that year, to 1143: and a history of the English church in four books. These Sir Henry Saville published an. 1596. The titles of his other works are various. A

¹ De Scrip. Brit. p. 195.

faithful and animated translation of the above histories would be well received, I think, by the public.

William of Newborough, in Latin *Neubrigensis*, William of Newborough. was a monk in the abbey of that name in Yorkshire, now the seat of the noble family of Bellasyfe. He was born in 1136, and lived to see the end of the century. Among his works the most valuable is the history of England, (*Rerum Anglicarum*) in five books, from the conquest to 1197, the eighth year of king Richard, which extensive knowledge of the subject, veracity of narration, proper arrangement, and uncommon purity of language, have rendered highly estimable. I have sometimes styled him the most philosophical of the monkish writers; for I saw in him an honest love of truth, a depth of observation, and a boldness of reflection which the subservient spirit of the cowl could not stifle. His severe strictures on the fabling Geoffry of Monmouth have excited the displeasure of some ancient Britons and of Leland²; and

² De Scrip. Brit. p. 203.

Pitts dares to question his general veracity, because, on some occasions, he too freely patronized the civil measures of the state³. The above history was published by Hearn in three volumes 8vo. 1719. Mine is a German edition in folio.

Ralph de
Diceto.

Radulphus de Diceto, dean of St. Paul's, contemporary with Henry II. and his sons, wrote two histories of this country, one a mere abridgment (*Abbreviationes chronicorum*) from 589 to 1197, and the other (*Imagines historiarum*) from 1149 to 1199, the first of king John. From his rank in the church, and the various business in which he was employed, Radulphus was well qualified to record the transactions, particularly of his own times, and he has done it with accuracy and truth. His facts seem judiciously selected, and they are arranged with perspicuity; and his narration, without being very correct, or elegant, or minute or flowing, proceeds with manliness and candor. I have observed that he, as well as other writers of the age, were well acquainted with the characters and great occurrences of other countries, which

³ De Ill. Ang. Scrip. p. 270.

they have carefully transmitted. The titles of the works of Radulphus are numerous: and his two histories, as just described, were published by Sir Roger Twysden in his collection of *ten writers*; an. 1652.

Gervasius, a monk of Christ-church in Canterbury, was coeval with the last writer. His works are a *Chronicle* of English history from 1122 to the end of the reign of Richard, the *Lives* of the archbishops of Canterbury from Austin to 1205, and a *Treatise* on the destruction by fire, and the rebuilding of the cathedral of Christ-church, which himself witnessed. — In the writings of Gervasius is much curious information, and they are disposed with great chronological precision. But on the transactions of the church, and particularly those, in which he was personally interested, the disputes between his monastery and the archbishops, he dwells with a disgusting prolixity. General events are well told, and sometimes with a circumstantial minuteness, which an accurate observer only could have detailed. His description of the rebuilding of Christ-church is a valuable piece. The style of Gervasius has no flowers;

Gervase of
Canterbury.

but it is not low, or obscure, or languid. His works are in the last-mentioned collection.

Roger de
Hoveden.

Roger de Hoveden, or de Howden, was domestic chaplain to Henry II. and was employed by him in the transaction of many important concerns, being, from early application, particularly skilled in the canon and civil law. After the death of his master he retired, and compiled his *Annals* of English history, from 731, when Bede's history closes, to 1202, a work replete with various matter, and written with an accuracy that surprises. In recording events, he not only notes the years, but the months, the days, and sometimes the hours when they happened. "If to
"veracity," says Leland, "the first quality of
"the historian, Roger had joined some little of
"Roman elegance, he would have borne off the
"palm without a rival." But that he neglected. Hence his style is slovenly, his phraseology often scriptural, and his narration loose, unconnected, and void of order. He is accused of having pirated his materials from the histories of

Ut sup. p. 229.

Simeon

Simeon of Durham, Henry of Huntingdon, and the abbot of Peterborough, authors of renown, and the last his contemporary. The charge, in its full extent, is not just; for he relates many things of which himself had been witness. In the reign of Edward I. when his claim to the sovereignty of Scotland was litigated, the libraries of England were ordered to be searched, and the *annals* of Hoveden being found with other histories, on their statement of prior facts was the proud pretension ascertained⁵, that is, in the opinion of the English monarch and his court. The *Annals* are in the collection of Sir Henry Saville.

Giraldus Cambrensis, descended from noble ancestors, was born near Tenby in Pembroke-shire. With much self-complacency, and with a vanity which has been seldom equalled, himself has related his first education under his uncle, the bishop of St. David's; his application to study; his great fame, as a rhetorician, in the schools of Paris; his preferments in the church; his labors to save the souls of his countrymen, who neglected

Giraldus
Cambrensis.

⁵ Thos. Walsingh. an. 1292.

to pay the tithes of their cheefe and wool; his promotion to the archdeaconry of Brecon and to the see of St. David's, which the disinclination of Henry II. would not permit him to occupy; the further prosecution of learning, in the laws and theology, at Paris, where his fame outwent the most exalted praise; his being called to the court of Henry, appointed his chaplain, and preceptor to prince John, and his journey with the youth into Ireland; his progress through Wales with Baldwin archbishop of Canterbury, where they preached the crusade, and his *Latin* sermons drew tears of extacy from the listening crouds of Welshmen; his better prospects at the accession of Richard, as the last king would not reward virtues and abilities which he was compelled to admire; his refusing the bishoprics of Bangor and Landaff, having fixed his heart on the see of St. David's; his retiring (as the aspect of public affairs, during the absence of the king, promised no success) to Lincoln, where, for six years, he heard the lectures of William de Monte in theology, and composed many works; his second election to the see of St. David's, wherein

he was again opposed by the primate Hubert, involved in difficulties, forced, at a great expense, to make three journeys to Rome, and at last defeated; his withdrawing from the world, where, in a studious privacy, he spent seventeen years*. Such, from his own description, was the life of Giraldus, a man of uncommon activity, endowments, and learning.—In the long catalogue of his works, the principal are the *Topography of Ireland*, drawn from actual survey, but which, with some interesting information, is crowded with tales of strange events and appearances:—The *Conquest of Ireland*, in two books, which, though too partial to the English name, is a production of great value:—And the *Itinerary of Wales*, containing a description of that country and its inhabitants of which many parts are highly curious.—The style of Giraldus is affected and unequal. He took delight in drawing characters, and in reporting the speeches of his heroes, after the manner of the ancients; but he was not aware that the clumsy imitation betrayed

* Giral. Camb. de rebus a se gestis, ap. Angl. Sacr.

his weakness and want of classical taste. — Mr. Camden collected the works, I have mentioned, which were printed, with others, at Francfort in 1603.

Geoffry Vin-
sauf.

Geoffry Vinisalvus, a poet and historian, lived under Richard and John, the first of whom he accompanied into Palestine, and whose expedition and exploits he recorded. This is the *Iter Hierosolymitanum* in six books. The biographers of Vinsauf, even Leland, speak of his accomplishments, and the admirable style of his works, in a manner that has surprised me. So labored to me is his diction, that it raised disgust; his dull narrations tired me; and I could not give credit to his statement of facts, which a romantic fancy seemed always to have magnified, and often to have invented. — The *Iter* of Vinsauf is in Gale's collection, an. 1687.

Matthew
Paris.

Matthew Paris, a monk of St. Alban's who lived in the reign of Henry III. wrote two histories of England, the *Historia Major* from the conquest to 1259, and the *Historia Minor*, which is an abridgment of the former made by himself. Matthew is described as an universal

scholar, and he seems to have merited the praise. His histories are an inestimable treasure, for their accuracy, their independent and free spirit, and their extensive information. But the style is heavy and inelegant; and a weak credulity introducing idle tales, too often breaks and disgraces the interesting narration. He saw the abusive pretensions of Rome, and boldly censured them — Of these works many editions have been given.

The *Chronicle de Mailros*, a monastery on the banks of the Tweed, was written by various hands, and contains the annals of the Scottish kings from 735 to 1270: but it also records some events which interest the English historian. — The *Chronicle* is in Gale.

Walter Hemingford, a canon regular of Gisborn in Yorkshire, published a *Chronicle* of English history from the conquest to the death of Henry III. 1272. His facts are mostly drawn from other writers. — The work is in Gale.

The *Annals de Margan*, an abbey in Glamorganshire founded by the famous duke Robert in 1147, contain a very succinct account of the

affairs of this country from the conquest to 1232, but such as are not all found in the more voluminous writers. — They are in Gale.

*Annals of
Burton.*

The *Annals of Burton*, written by an unknown author, a monk of that abbey in Staffordshire, profess to open with the year 1004; but it is not till the reign of Richard, that they enter into any detail. From this year 1189, they exhibit much curious matter, and proceed to 1263, or the latter years of Henry III. Matthew Paris and this author were, probably, contemporaries; and their histories confirm, and throw mutual light on each other. The annals are in Gale.

*Annals of
Waverly.*

The *Annals of Waverley* are another anonymous compilation, written, as it appears, by a succession of monks. They begin with the conquest, the author of which part professes that he had seen William and been in his court. The narration then goes on, with much simplicity and apparent candor to 1291, the nineteenth year of Edward I. Waverley was a Cistercian abbey in Surrey. — These annals are also in Gale.

From these copious sources, as other writers had done, I collected the principal materials. But I seldom consulted Matthew of Westminster, who in his *Chronicle* from Adam to the reign of Edward II. as far as he could, has abridged Matthew Paris, nor the *Chronicle* of John Bromton from 588 to 1198, a writer of much more recent date than the last year announces, and the transcriber of Hoveden in nearly all that is important; nor the *Compilation* of Henry Knighton, *de eventibus Angliæ*, from the reign of Edgar to 1395, the last years of Richard II. a valuable historian, but who, having lived at so late a period, could add no weight to the testimony of more contemporary authors. The two last are in Twysden.—It was not my wish to swell the line of references with an unnecessary display of names. So also, as I only looked for the most authentic documents, I was satisfied with those which approached nearest to the times, and only sought other aid as it became necessary. The reader will therefore notice that I do not quote Matthew Paris, till the other sources were exhausted, and his authority, as

the events came nearer to him, grew. The method, I thought, would best conduce to the establishment of historic truth.

In stating the controversy between Henry and the primate, and in my relation of the latter's life, I found the authors, I have mentioned, abundantly informing. Them I copied, and the four contemporary writers, Herbert de Bosham, William of Canterbury, John of Salisbury, and the abbot Alan, whose relations are prefixed to the collection of the extensive correspondence on the subject, and the letters themselves. No portion of history is so richly supplied with materials as this. The biography is in three books, written with too partial an inclination to the primate and his cause; and the letters in five. These are from various correspondents, the greatest men of the age, and are an invaluable monument of its learning, its politics, and its taste. They were published from a MS. in the Vatican library, by Christianus Lupus, at Brussels, an. 1682.

To the moderns I am not much indebted; for possessing the original writers themselves, I

wished to be guided by them alone, and to feel no foreign influence. Occasionally, however, I looked into Rapin, and Hume, and the History of Henry II. by George Lord Lyttelton.

Of *Rapin* the far most valuable part are the *notes* by his translator Tindal. The work itself is a base compilation, which has marred the beauty of English story, and led many writers, who have been satisfied to copy him, into an endless maze of errors. Sore from ill-usage, as he justly deemed it, and his expulsion from France, Rapin sought to revenge the injury on all its monarchs, mistating their views and politics: he vilified the religion of Rome and the characters of its ministers, from bigotry and absurd attachment to his new faith: and in relating the transactions of England, he was partial and unjust. On all occasions, the unfounded suggestions of his own mind, and loose surmises are presented, for the genuine statements of the ancient chroniclers, whom he dares to quote. Unfortunately, I have said, the spirit of this man has been transfused into other pens, through a thousand channels.

Even Mr. *Hume*, I fear, was sometimes content to transcribe from Rapin, when the best originals lay open before him. But the philosopher's fame rose not from the first volumes of his history, which, I trust, I may be permitted to say, are indistinct from compression, and sometimes inaccurate, perhaps, from the same cause. He seems to have finished them as a task, which had not engaged his heart, or roused the energies of his mind.

Lord Lyttelton's *history* is a valuable compilation, which the scholars of future days will consult. The lassitude I have felt in its perusal, only said that the digressions were too long and frequent, and that the story, which never ends, wanted life and interest. It is a treasure of knowledge, replete with much truth and accurate description. But I have to complain that his partiality for Henry permitted him not to see distinctly, even when the medium was most serene, and that the *horror of popery*, which in some is a real malady, had disordered his judgment. The mind which is oppressed by this disease, should not be allowed to enter on

the discussion of ecclesiastical matters, particularly at such a period as was that of Henry II. His notions also of a limited prerogative, and of a parliamentary representation, were drawn from a theory which the facts of history did not establish. What else I have to object to the noble author shall be mentioned in its place.

My authorities for the general history, which accompanies that of England, were the best I could procure. — In the concerns of France, which all along are connected with our own; historians supplied ample information; and to them were joined a few chronicles, and among the moderns, Mezeray, Daniel, and the president Henault.

In stating the affairs of Germany, Sicily, and Lombardy, I was happy in being able to recur to Muratori, the illustrious librarian of Modena, whose volumes of universal literature are themselves a library. His *Annali d'Italia* present every thing, from the original authors themselves, which the most scrupulous historian may desire. I was, besides, in possession of the *Chronicle* of the abbot of Ursperg, and of the *Life* of Fre-

deric Barbarossa, by Otho de Freisingen his uncle, and of an *Abridgment* of German history by Pteffel.

The *Annals* of Baronius and the *History* of Fleury were the authors I consulted on the affairs of the church. Too much cannot be said in praise of either. Baronius gives you ample extracts from the best authors, (for the treasures of the Vatican were all open to him,) on which the writer may form his own judgment, unbiassed by the partial and courtly views of the Roman cardinal. Unfortunately his researches end with the year 1198, and as yet the learned have but shown their weakness, in attempting to continue his labors. Baronius, however, it must be owned, was credulous; he wanted critical science, which, when he lived, was but in its infancy; and his love of controversy led him into disquisitions, which break unpleasantly the thread of history. He died in 1607.—Of the merits of Fleury I have elsewhere spoken⁷; and

⁷ Pref. to Abeil. p. xxvi.

I can add that, the more I have compared him with the original writers, the greater has been my admiration of his uncommon accuracy and scrupulous precision.

This account, though imperfect, of the authors I had by me, will, I hope, give some satisfaction. It will prove at least that my materials were not defective. — Should it be asked, why I did not extend my researches into the histories of Spain and other kingdoms, and unite their events with those I have recorded? I can reply, that it was not my plan to write a *general* history of the period, and that I wished only to bring forward such matters, as were either immediately connected with the concerns of England, or such as might serve, by their importance, to give relief and variety. On a larger scale than this, the history itself of England, which I viewed as the prominent and central figure, would have been thrown back on the scene, or have been overwhelmed in the accumulation of objects.

How the work itself, agreeably to the plan I laid down, has been executed, must be left to the judgment of an equitable public. I can only say,

that, as far as my abilities reached, they have been uniformly exerted. The subject certainly is interesting, particularly the reign of Henry, and more particularly the reign of John, over the principal events of which, those that lead, through *Magna Charta*, to the dawn of liberty, I have thrown, I think, some new light. I am well aware, that the task I undertook was arduous, and that on a subject, so generally understood, I exposed myself to censure.

By some I shall be accused of bigotry, and of seeing with popish eyes: while others, perhaps, may charge me with a freedom of thought, bordering on incredulity, and with a want of veneration for sacred persons and sacred things. In this discordance of opinions, I shall myself be disposed to conclude, that I have fortunately avoided the extremes, in which alone lies error.

To the reader, as he proceeds, two observations will occur, which I wish here to anticipate by remarking, 1. That I endeavoured, as far as the great complication of occurrences would permit, to give to each its proper place, whereby confusion might be avoided, and each year would measure

its own events. The arrangement, I have no doubt, will be admitted in theory. But then the consequence has been, that the narration has sometimes taken the broken form of annals, which to those who only read for amusement, or who only look for unity of design and parts nicely joined, may prove offensive. This defect if it be one, will be found to occur, where the years are thin of occurrences, or the under-parts have been various and independent; for the main action, I hope, will throughout appear uniform and never broken without design. Whatever may be thought by others, I adopted the measure from a conviction of its utility, and from having experienced that want of distinct arrangement in other writers, which generates confusion, and distracts the mind. Without any regard to dates, they leave many occurrences behind them, which they bring up at certain periods, as a mass of information can be best formed, and with the same view they can anticipate on futurity. I wished that my reader, under each year, might see the series of its events.—In the *Introduction* only I was necessitated to depart from this order,

and to collect into a point many antecedent transactions, from the circumstance of the reigns of those princes, whose, history I meant to review, having commenced at different periods. I could then from Book I. proceed regularly. On some other occasions, expediency prompted a violation of my rule; for I had not tied myself irrevocably to the rigid trammels of a chronicler.

2. I must notice the *dramatic* style, which I have sedulously adopted, whenever the original writer had himself used it, and at other times, when the narration, from its circumstantial detail, authorized the licence. Thus when the old writer related, that such things were said in conversation or at interviews, I sometimes took the liberty to make the persons speak for themselves, as, on the occasion itself, they certainly had done. This style of narration, practised by the best models in the schools of ancient Greece and Rome, has given to their writings that interesting charm, which captivates, which insensibly transports the reader into the company of their heroes and sages, obliterating, by a momentary magic, the distance of years, and consciousness of present existence.

existence. I had not always such noble personages to present; but to such as they were I was desirous to introduce my reader, that he might witness their manners, and hear their blunt and unadorned discourse. The method has, at least, the advantage of diversifying a long story; and as in more modern times, speech has not been less used, than it was *of yore*, why shall a style be rejected, which approaches nearest to common life, and which the ancients practised with success?

When I began my work, I thought I should have been able to intersperse, with some effect, observations on the *manners*, the *arts*, and the *learning* of the period; but I was soon sensible, that the minute digressions, which could not coalesce aptly with the general story, would either seem misplaced, or be lost in the rolling torrent of war and politics. I therefore reserved them for a distinct dissertation, which forms *Appendix I.*—It here becomes me to acknowledge my obligations to Dr. Henry, who in his history of England, has made researches, which in my

estimation, render it far the most valuable compilation we possess. I had prepared my own observations and extracts; but his work served to abridge my labor.

Appendix II. contains a critical examination of a *Letter* of Foliot, bishop of London, and of a *Bull* ascribed to Alexander III. the Roman bishop, which Lord Lyttelton found in the Cottonian collection of MSS. and on the supposed authority of which, (of the *Letter* I mean,) a material portion of his history is built. It became necessary coolly to weigh documents, of which an important use had been made; and the result of my inquiries was, that the *Letter* and the *Bull* were both *spurious*, or, which to me was tantamount, that they were of no authority.

I have to add, that I once intended to have prefixed to this work a *geographical* view of England, as it was in the 12th century, drawn from the old writers; and that my materials were in part collected. But the season of publication pressed, and already, it seemed, the volume had swollen to a cumbrous magnitude.

As I have no views in my pursuits, but to present historical truth as exempt, as may be, from the blemishes of political and religious prejudices, it will give me pleasure to retract any errors, into which I may have fallen. Errors there are, I am well aware; though neither incaution, nor a love of controversy, nor any want of sufficient evidence has produced them. For these I may claim indulgence: but to the bar of an enlightened and just criticism I would rather appeal for approbation or censure.—I had hoped the time was fast advancing when men of literary pursuits, at least, would no longer feel that influence of climate, of religion; of politics, which hitherto, by a fatal bias, had warped the energies of genius, and checked the progress of important truths. And still I will indulge the pleasing hope, though the events of every day convince me, that we have yet far to go, and that a world of idle altercation must yet be passed through. That the age, with which I have lately conversed, was dark, I am ready to admit, and to admit that ours is comparatively enlightened: but of this light what hitherto have

been the fruits? The bounds of science have been enlarged, and the arts perfected. The mind of man, in its moral tendencies, remains as it was, narrow, self-interested, intolerant. And so it must be, I believe, till other ages have gone round, and we have learned to be, what it imports us most to be, *men and brethren*.

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T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
R E I G N S , &c.

INTRODUCTION.

*State of England. — State of France. — Germany
Sicily. — Rome.*

AWFUL is the impression which now falls on my mind, when, with the annals of times long passed open before me, I sit down to contemplate the manners of men and the events of their days, and to trace, through the maze of its progress, the meandering, and often evanescent, line of truth. *History* is the narration of *facts*; but we receive them on the testimony of men like ourselves, whom want of evidence sometimes misleads, or incaution, or credulity, or views of party, or inability of discernment, exposed to error. And when facts are even most authentic; how does attention slumber, with what languor

INTRODUCTION.

~~moves~~ the page, if the motives which led to
 action, if the views which animated, if the policy
 of design, if the mistakes of judgment, if the
 workings of passion, are unrecorded, and the
 transactions of *man* are only *numbered* on the
 scene? We look in vain for the varied progress,
 which the efforts of mind, that is, the evolutions
 of rational nature are calculated to exhibit: the
 distinction only of periods, or broken dates, the
 names of men and places obscurely rendered,
 loose descriptions, battles lost and won, arrest
 the eye in a disgustful reiteration. When the
 chronicler who must lead his steps, has so written,
 what shall the historian do? Shall he be permitted,
 or shall he dare, from the suggestions of his own
 fancy, to supply the defects of his guide, and
 embellish the rude sketch? Or, with patient toil
 pursuing the dreary track, shall he be accurate
 only and true? Fiction has its province, and
 truth her's; and they may not be confounded.
 My guides, whom the cowl covered, whom, in
 a dark age, genius did not illumine, nor science
 polish, have no variety that pleases, no style that
 charms: but I will follow them, earnest to bring
 forward their unadorned narration, to drop the
 tale which superstition created, and credulity
 wove, and willing rather to incur the censure of
 dulness, than to attempt amusement by illusive
 arts or the supplements of invention.

HENRY, the second of the name, called Plantagenet, was now in possession of the English throne. ^{From 1154 to 1160.} He was son of Geoffrey, earl of Anjou, and of Matilda, daughter of Henry I. once empress of Germany. At his father's death, the provinces of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, had devolved on him; and he possessed Normandy in the right of his mother. Eleanor, the heiress of Aquitaine, after almost sixteen years cohabitation, was divorced from her husband, Louis VII. of France. Within six weeks she gave her hand to Henry, and with it the splendid dower of seven provinces. Guienne, Poitou, Saintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Angoumois, and the Limosin. This was in the year 1152^{*}. — So rich in titles and in extent of territory was this favored child of fortune, when, on the demise of Stephen, two years afterwards, agreeably to a convention previously settled at Winchester, whereby he was named successor to the throne, Henry was saluted king of England. He had reached his twenty-first year.

Worn down by the turbulent scenes of the preceding reign, the people now ardently raised their eyes to the young prince; and they augured happiness to themselves, and to him glory. They knew he had been tutored in the rigid school of military discipline; and they had been told of his martial prowess, of his prudence in counsel,

^{*} Hist. of Abeil. Vol. II. p. 128.

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of his firmness in action, and of his experience in the general arts of government ². Nor were themselves strangers to his person or character. More than once he had visited England: he had passed four years at Bristol, under the eye of his uncle Gloucester, the bastard son of Henry, the first scholar and the first warrior of the age, the friend to Matilda, and the pillar of her cause; and recently he had dared to contend with the armies of Stephen, an experienced and brave foldier, whom he compelled to terms of honorable peace ³. Now was Henry in the quiet attainment of every object, to which even his ambition, it seemed, could aspire, being duke of Normandy, earl of Anjou; duke of Aquitaine, and king of England. His foreign territories alone were more than a third part of the whole French monarchy, and the vassal of Louis was more powerful than his lord.

The splendor of the station would have dazzled another prince: it only served to rouse the active powers of Henry. It had been stipulated at Winchester, in 1153, that the foreign mercenaries, on both sides, should be dismissed, and the castles be demolished, which had been lately erected. They were the seats of every enormity. Soon, therefore, the mercenaries disappeared,

² Gul. Neubrig. Rerum Angl. l. 2. c. 1.

³ Hen. Hunt. p. 227.

and the castles fell. — Agreeably to the same treaty, he resumed the crown-lands, which Stephen had alienated, or the rapacity of the barons had usurped; and in a council held at London, granted a *Charter of Liberties*, which confirmed that of his grandfather, Henry I. But neither this, nor the deed which it renewed, and which contained many of the laws of the Confessor, at that time attracted notice. — Contemporary writers draw an enchanting picture of the times, when, after the horrors of the preceding reign, peace with her attendant blessings was seen to return, amidst the acclamations of a reviving nation. The king gave his hours to the concerns of state; but, like Alcibiades, he could unbend from the important labor; and he committed to able hands the administration of public justice*. The earl of Leicester and Richard de Lucy were joined in the commission of grand justiciary, then the highest post of dignity: Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, whose important services had bound him to the throne, was a principal adviser: and, on his recommendation, Thomas a Becket, then archdeacon of Canterbury, whom the primate loved and honored, was raised to the office of chancellor†.

The king had now leisure to attend to his distant territories, and sailing to Normandy, he

* Neubrig. c. 1.

† Gerv. chron. an. 1154.

did homage to Louis for the fiefs he held under him. — *Homage* was thus performed: the *vassal*, on his knees, unarmed and bareheaded, held both his hands between those of his *lord*, who was sitting, and, at the same time, pronounced an oath of allegiance. On the part of the lord, the ceremony denoted protection and defence, and on that of the vassal, reverence and subjection. — Geoffrey, the king's brother, claimed his father's earldoms, which had been left to him, and Henry, though reluctantly, had sworn to fulfil the will. It was, indeed, conditional, that is, if the elder brother should ever possess the English throne. The youth now demanded his paternal inheritance, which Henry refused, having obtained it was said, from Rome, a dispensation from an oath, he had not freely made. The injured prince had recourse to arms; but the airy prospect of three earldoms soon vanished, and the castles, he before possessed, were levelled to the ground. The king, in his clemency, settled on him a pension, not unsuitable to his rank*. — From the capital of Normandy to the Pyrenean mountains, the vigor of a sound policy united the various states; when in the spring of the year, 1157, Henry returned into England. Becket, the companion of his pleasures and his toils, had attended his master, evincing by his conduct that the

* Neubrig. c. 7.

place of friend and minister was due to the powers of his mind and the accomplishments of his person⁷.

During the troubles of the last reign, David, the Scottish king, had possessed himself of the three English counties, which lay nearest to him, and Henry, then on a visit to David, had been induced to promise that, should providence raise him to the throne of his ancestors, he would never claim the possession. David then conferred on him the honor of knighthood, a necessary prelude to the due discharge of the important duty of arms. But a territory of so much value was not to be lost, and Henry now demanded its surrender. The power of the claimant was irresistible, and to urge the circumstance of the promise would avail little. Malcolm, therefore, the grandson of David, and who had inherited his crown, did not hesitate to comply, and in return he received the earldom of Huntingdon, to which he could plead a more ancient title⁸. — He was called to the west.

The Welsh, whom no efforts of our kings had permanently subjected, availing themselves of the distracted politics of Stephen, had expelled the English settlers, had made bolder incursions into the neighbouring counties, and had assumed the independence of a free people. But unfortunately

⁷ Vita S. Tho. Cant. c. 4. ⁸ Neubrig. c. 4.

no common interest united the princes, or chieftains of the country: they hated the English, and they were not friends to one another. The historians describe them as a people, ferocious in their manners, and unquiet from barbarism, intent on rapine, and only pleased with the chase or with war. The harsh features of the country well accorded with these habits of rational nature. Henry saw with pain that they; who had been tributary to his grandfather, refused to do him homage, and that, if the evil were not checked, his own territories must be exposed to incessant insults. Owen Gwyneth ruled in the north, and Rhees ap Gryffyth in the south.

At the head of a large army the English monarch entered Flintshire, where Gwyneth lay encamped, prepared, as it seemed, to give him battle; and with the vanguard advanced into a narrow pass between two mountains. Instantly, a numerous band, which was in ambush, rose with horrid cries, and from the woody sides of the defile assaulted the invaders. The unexpected and fierce attack was irresistible. Henry retreated; but the greater part of his followers fell, and it was reported that himself was among the slain. The report dismayed the troops who were advancing to the pass, whilst the enemy poured down from the hills, and assailed them with impetuous fury. At the moment, the young hero appeared: he

rallied his men, and led them to the charge. The Welshmen gave way, and retired, in confusion, to the woods.

But it was evident, unless they proceeded with the utmost caution, that no real advantage could be gained over such an enemy. It was therefore resolved, marching along the sea-shore, to desolate the plains; and a fleet received orders, as the occasion served, to descend on the open country. Owen retreated to Snowdon. Success now attended the English arms. Roads were cut, the woods were cleared, castles were built. The Welsh prince then sued for peace, and Henry was happy to grant it on terms, honorable and advantageous to England. Owen promised to do homage for North Wales, to yield up the lands with their castles, which; in the last reign, had been seized, and as hostages for his future fidelity, to deliver two of his sons into the hands of the victor. The inferior princes, though Henry had withdrawn his army, submitted also, on like terms, to the lords of the marches; and ap Gryffyth himself, after a vain resistance of some months, sullenly bowed his neck, and did homage⁹.

Henry, in 1158, was again in Normandy. His brother Geoffrey was dead, on whom the inhabitants of Nantes in Bretagne had conferred the earldom of their city and its territory. This

⁹ Neunbrig. c. 5.

Henry claimed as his brother's heir; but he feared the opposition of the French king, who, with reason, might be jealous of his further aggrandizement, and to remove it, opened a negociation. This was a treaty of marriage between his eldest son Henry, and Margaret, the daughter of Louis by his second wife Constantia, princess of Castille. Henry was in his fifth year, and Margaret in her cradle. With joy the proposal was accepted, and the kings met on the borders of Normandy. But Becket was appointed to adjust the treaty, while his master marched into Bretagne, and unmolested took possession of the earldom. The able negociator was not less successful. Louis consented that three castles in the Norman Vexin, a frontier of great moment, should be his daughter's portion, and which, till the marriage was celebrated, should remain in the custody of three knights of the temple. He even agreed to send the infant into Normandy, to be educated as Henry might direct.¹⁰ — The address of the chancellor in this negociation, and his munificence in the French court, graced by a retenue more than princely, are highly extolled by the historians.

Not many months after this event, which was followed by the surrender to him of various castles, that had belonged to the demesne of his ancestors, we find Henry preparing for a

¹⁰ Neubrig. c. 27.

great expedition against the earl of Toulouse. — William, duke of Aquitaine, grandfather of Eleanor, having married the heiress of Toulouse, its earldom was annexed to the duchy; but that, involved in difficulties which his profusion created, he afterwards mortgaged to the count of St. Gilles, who assumed the title of earl of Toulouse. The mortgage was unredeemed, when Eleanor, sole heiress of Aquitaine with its dependences, married the French king. In his wife's name, Louis had demanded the earldom; but the intervention of the holy war impeded the prosecution of his claim. The claim, with the hand of Eleanor, was transferred to Henry, which he now resolved to enforce. The earldom of Toulouse, at that time, comprehended the Querci, and the greater part of the present Languedoc. Cheerfully did the barons of England espouse the distant quarrel, and soon Henry appeared in Guienne at the head of a formidable army. The lords of the neighbouring provinces crowded to his standard; and Malcolm of Scotland was there, and a prince of Wales; but amongst them all, foremost in arms and opulence, shone the puissant Berenger, duke of Provence and king of Arragon, who, in greatness of mind or caprice of fancy, would only be styled count of Barcelona. The city of Toulouse was surrounded. As the storm approached,

Raymond, which was the earl's name, had implored the aid of Louis, whose sister he had married. Reluctantly did the king listen to his prayer; but being at last roused, he marched to the south with a chosen band, and entered the city. Secure of success, the allied army lay heedless on the plain. With amazement did Henry hear that the French monarch in person was within the walls, when he summoned the chieftains, and demanded their advice. Becket, with his usual fire, proposed an immediate assault, urging that the garrison was still weak, and that a noble prize would grace the triumph of their arms. But his opinion did not prevail; and Henry, whose interest it was to maintain the feudal maxims, by which his own dominions were secured, declared he would not attack a place defended by his superior lord, with whom he was not at war. He raised the siege, and retired; but he ravaged the province, and having taken Cahors, which he committed to the chancellor, withdrew with the main body of his troops into Normandy¹¹. — Many noble warriors perished before Toulouse, and great treasures were expended.

A hundred and fourscore thousand pounds, more than two millions of our money, had been levied for this war, and the mode of raising it

¹¹ Neubrig. c. 10.

was new in the English annals. It was done by *scutage*, that is, by a pecuniary commutation for personal service. Before this, at the prince's command, agreeably to the fees or tenures they immediately held under the crown, his vassals appeared in arms, bringing with them their appointed contingent of knights, retainers, or tenants. And thus the armies rose. But on this occasion a proclamation was issued, which empowered the vassal, in lieu of his personal attendance, to contribute a sum of money, proportioned to the expence he would have incurred by service. The inferior military tenants were eased, as it freed them from the toil and great expence of a distant war, and the king was better served. With the money he hired a mercenary force, men well-inured to discipline, and whom the condition of their pay bound to permanent service: whereas a feudal army, untractable and undisciplined, headed by haughty and independent barons, spurned control; and when the term of their engagement expired, usually only of forty days, they were at liberty to withdraw. Contention and personal feuds attended their march, and the prince or leader possessed little more than the name of supreme commander.

The conduct of Becket, in the expedition I have described, drew general attention. Into

his family, we are told, many noblemen had sent their children, to receive from him the rudiments of discipline, and to be trained to chivalry. Seven hundred knights he led into the field, each with his attendant squire; and where honor invited, or danger threatened, these were foremost in the battle. Nor was the chancellor himself less forward than they. Whilst he remained in the Querci, to defend its capital and other conquests which had been made, at the head of his troops, he attempted three castles, which his master had deemed impregnable, and took them by storm. He passed the Garonne, and insulted the earldom of Toulouse. But his presence was necessary in Normandy. Leaving, therefore, his household forces to secure the forts he had taken, and the king's conquests, he hired, at his own charge, twelve hundred knights, and four thousand stipendiaries, to attend him for forty days. The knights received a liberal pay: they were fed at his expense, and often dined at his table. In single combat, it is said, he, one day, engaged a French knight, famous in arms: him he dismounted with his lance, and gaining his horse, led him off in triumph¹². — The manners of the age, and the buoyant spirit of Becket, which roused him to

¹² Vita c. 9.

achievements, and the ardor with which he fought his master's glory, shall reconcile to the fastidious casuist such unsacred and indecorous scenes.

A treaty of peace, soon afterwards, was concluded between the two monarchs, with which Henry had reason to be pleased; for he retained many of the places he had conquered, and the general rights of the dukedom of Aquitaine were secured to him. The primary object of the war only, that is, the annexation of Toulouse to his dominions, remained unattained. On some future occasion, fortune, he trusted, would be more propitious to his designs. It was the end of the year 1159.

Matilda, while Henry's reign thus opened, resided in Normandy, the chief administration of which had been intrusted to her care, not an uninterested witness of the spreading glory of her son. Europe had not beheld a more illustrious woman. By her first marriage with Henry V. she was empress of Germany; by her second, countess of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine; and by her father's will named duchess of Normandy, and queen of England. The efforts she made to obtain the crown, which was her due, argued a bold and perseverant mind; and the tissue of her adventures, in its pursuit, has hardly been equalled in the annals of romance. In adversity

she was magnanimous; in prosperity, haughty and insolent¹¹. Disappointment, age, and reflection, finally lowered the violence of her temper, and she learned the virtues, which she wanted most, moderation and mildness. Her love for Henry was maternal. With care she watched his tender years; and when the death of Stephen called him to the crown, she could resign it without a murmur, and withdrew her own brows from its enchanting circle. Happy in a subordinate station, she had no ambition but in the prosperity of the king, and to promote it were all her efforts turned.

We read little of Eleanor, Henry's queen. She had borne him four sons, William, Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, of whom the eldest was dead, and a daughter, after her grandmother, named Matilda. The ages of the royal couple were very unequal. But though she had seen ten years more than he, her beauty and natural vivacity were unimpaired. These gained her many lovers; but she wanted the address, or perhaps the inclination, to hold their affections. Her temper was violent, and her passions headstrong. The French monarch, it appears, she never loved: she ridiculed his monastic piety; and his simple and uncourtly manners were to her a source of incessant banter. I know not

¹¹ Wil. Malm. passim.

that,

that, in the court of her uncle at Antioch, when she accompanied her husband to the east, she was guilty in the degree imputed to her; but his conduct, on the occasion, fixed a stain on her honor, and possibly left an impression on her heart, which no time could efface¹⁴. A divorce, at last, took place, on the idle plea of consanguinity, for they were cousins in the fourth degree, after they had cohabited sixteen years, and had had two daughters. A prince, less delicate, or more politic, than Louis, would, on no account, have adopted the fatal measure, when he knew that the rich provinces she had brought him must again be severed from his crown. We are told that, more than once, she had seen the son of Matilda, at her husband's court. He was young and animated: his air was martial, and his manners noble. These were charms for the gay Eleanor, and they disposed her, it may be thought, to urge more vehemently a separation from Louis. At that time, likewise, Henry had a crown in reversion, and it might be no unpleasing reflection, that she should have it in her power to mortify a husband she disliked, by a tender of her dominions to his rival. No sooner was she free, than more than one suitor, in the true spirit of chivalry, pressed for the honor of her hand. They lay in ambush to

¹⁴ Hist. of Abeil. vol. ii. p. 215.
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seize her, as she retired towards Guienne: but she escaped; and Henry Plantagenet meeting her at Poitiers, the nuptials were celebrated. Not six weeks, I have said, had elapsed from the divorce¹⁵. The ambition, at least, of Henry was amply gratified; but with seven provinces she brought him a world of sorrows. Together they were crowned at Westminster, and again at Worcester.

From 1149
to 1160.
State of
France.

Since the return of Louis VII. from Palestine, in 1149¹⁶, no great event had diversified the politics of France. Grieved and unsuccessful he returned, having lost a hundred thousand men, to meet the reproaches of his subjects, and to witness the dismemberment of his empire. Louis, if we look to the integrity of his character, may seem to have merited a better fate: but it was his misfortune to have been born with a mind too prone to enthusiasm, which hurried him into difficulties, and to have lived with Henry Plantagenet. With this youth he could not cope; though age might have taught him experience, and experience wisdom. When Henry was born, Louis had been four years on the throne of France. But there are minds which a certain intuition guides to better policy, than by others is often learned in the school of progressive observation. With Louis it should have ever been

¹⁵ Neubrig. l. i. c. 31. ¹⁶ Hist. of Abel. vol. ii. p. 217.

a first design, when he saw that fortune smiled on this darling child, to have thrown down the ladder she held before him, and to have dashed in pieces every object of his heart; whereas, easy and unsuspicious, he permitted his advance, and only then meditated opposition, when, rising step by step, he had gained a firm footing, and could reach securely to the prize he had in view.

When Eustace, eldest son of Stephen, during the troubles in England, married Constantia, the French king's sister, he was promised by him the investiture of Normandy. Afterwards, Louis fell from his word, and gave it to young Henry. In this there was policy, as, at the time, it appeared that Eustace would succeed to his father's throne. But soon the earl of Anjou died, and his territories devolving on Henry, from that moment he became formidable. Yet the next year, Louis repudiates his queen. He talked of his conscience, and of the laws of the church, and vainly fancied; says a modern writer¹⁷, that the poorest gentleman in his dominions would not take for his wife so base a woman: then would Aquitaine descend to her daughters. The airy system vanished; and Louis viewing the accumulated power of the young prince,

¹⁷ Mezeray.

and in it the folly of his own conduct, was willing, though perhaps too late, to impede its further consequences. He began hostilities against him, aided by a powerful confederacy, at the head of which were prince Eustace, the earl of Blois, and Geoffrey Plantagenet. The two latter had been disappointed in their designs on the person of Eleanor. This was in the year 1152. The unprovoked attack, owing to the good conduct and undaunted spirit of Henry, met with little success; and, after some months, a truce was concluded, during which, news came to the French court, that the duke of Normandy had made peace with Stephen, and that he was declared successor to his throne. Again the irritable monarch entered Normandy; but Henry, whose situation called for peace, by the warmest professions of respect for his person, and zeal for his service, so soothed the angered king, that he listened to terms of accommodation, and gave him the peace he wished for¹⁸. It is not long after this, that we behold the same Henry, bareheaded and unarmed before his lord, doing homage on his knees for the fairest portion of the Gallic empire. — Such to France were the fatal effects of the divorce, and of the easy and undecided character of her king.

¹⁸ Gerv. an. 1152. Chron. Norman. *ibid.*

We may now view him in circumstances more congenial with his humor. He had no male issue, and his nobles pressed him again to marry. Alphonso VIII. king of Castille, who, from his superiority over the other Spanish princes, and his victories over the Moors, assumed the title of emperor of Spain, had a daughter, Constantia. Her Louis asked in marriage, and obtained her, flattering himself, perhaps, that the circumstance might procure him an ally against Henry on the side of Guienne. They were married, and crowned at Orleans, in 1155. Soon after the ceremony, in company with his new queen, Louis undertook a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella. On the borders of Spain, Sanchez, king of Navarre, whose queen was the sister of Constantia, received and entertained them. They proceeded. But Alphonso, hearing of their arrival, sent ambassadors to request they would not return, without honoring Toledo with their presence. The invitation was accepted. Vast preparations, in the mean while, were made for their reception; and the kings and princes of the land, and the prelates and great vassals of the crown, assembled. The royal travellers arrived. To the penitential and pious exercises of Compostella now succeeded the pomp, the amusements, the gallantry, of the Spanish court. Louis, it is said, viewed the scene with admiration, while it recalled to

his mind the festive magnificence, with which he had been entertained at Constantinople, when, a few years before, he marched against the infidels of the east¹⁹. In return for this munificent treatment, and the rich presents he made to Louis and his attendants, Alphonso only begged a portion of the relics of St. Eugenius, first bishop of Toledo, which reposed in the abbey of St. Denys. The modest request could not be refused, and after the return of the royal guests into France, an arm of the saint was sent²⁰.

The events of the reign of Henry, which I have described, to the conclusion of a second peace, have sufficiently developed the state of France to the year 1160.

From II 2
to 1160.
Germany.

At a time, when Italy was torn by a thousand factions; when the city of Rome was distracted by internal feuds; when its pontiff was aiming at universal empire; and when the horrors of civil commotion menaced the divided states of Germany, Frederic Barbarossa, duke of Suabia, in a general diet of the empire, had been unanimously elected king of the Romans and of Germany, in the year 1152. Conrad III. his uncle and predecessor, had an infant son; but he was aware that an experienced intrepid chief would now, more than ever, be necessary, to

¹⁹ Hist. of Abeil. vol. ii. p. 199.

²⁰ Muratori, an. 1155, ex Ferreras.

meet the storm that had been collecting round the throne of his ancestors. In his last moments, therefore, he recommended Frederic to the states, obtaining a promise from him that his son should possess the duchy of Suabia. Frederic was endowed with splendid qualities. He was an able statesman; his courage was heroic: and his views, it was believed, were at once directed by a thirst of glory, and the love of his people. He had accompanied Conrad into the east, and had witnessed his overthrow in the deserts of Capadocia²¹.

Having repudiated his wife, Adelaide, under pretence of consanguinity, and diffused, as far as might be, the blessings of concord among his vassals, Frederic prepared to go into Italy. To pacify the disturbances of Lombardy, and to receive from the Roman bishop the imperial crown, were the objects of his journey. Adrian IV. was pope²². In the plains of Roncaglia, between Placentia and Cremona, (a buckler suspended from a mast, according to ancient usage, announcing the solemn ceremony,) the king reviewed his vassals. The feudatories of the crown, with their respective bands, appeared before him; and they who, without permission, had dared to be absent, were condemned by

²¹ Hist. of Abeil. vol. ii. p. 201.

²² Ibid. vol. ii. p. 177.

their peers to the forfeiture of their fiefs. — In a public diet, he then heard the complaints of many cities, and promised to redress their grievances. They complained of the Milanese and their allies: against whom, therefore, Frederic denounced his vengeance. The destruction of castles, the pillage of towns, and the waste of villages, followed the hostile declaration; after which, anxious of the imperial dignity, the king pressed on his march towards the gates of Rome²³.

Deputies from the Roman people waited on him, as he approached: they requested from him the confirmation of their privileges, and of the senate they had re-established; they demanded a sum of money for the crown he came to receive; they entreated him to take from their bishop the temporal sovereignty of Rome, and to leave him such as he was in ancient times²⁴. With disdain he rejected their petitions. Adrian then met him, and the circumstances of the interview were curious²⁵; but the German was finally constrained to submit to the proud ceremonial of the Roman court. They entered the city together, and Frederic was crowned amidst the thundering

²³ Murat. an. 1154.

²⁴ Hist. of Abeil, vol. ii. p. 114.

²⁵ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 181.

acclamations of his army. Not long after this, he returned through Lombardy into Germany, towards the close of the year 1155.

Now it was that, in a diet of the empire, he terminated the contest which had long subsisted between Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, and Henry, margrave of Austria, concerning the succession to the dukedom of Bavaria. It had threatened to involve all the German states in war. To the duke he adjudged the contested territory, which his ancestors had long held; and raising Austria to a duchy, with it he invested the margrave, and conferred other rights and immunities on him and his family. Both parties, well satisfied, submitted to the award, and discord ceased²⁶.

A northern prelate, returning from Rome, had been forcibly seized as he passed through Germany. The insult was felt by Adrian, and he dispatched two cardinals, Orlando of St. Mark and Bernard of St. Clement, to carry his complaints to Frederic, whom they found at Besançon, receiving homage from the deputies of the kingdom of Arles; and they presented to him the papal brief. It complained of the sacrilegious insult, just mentioned, which Frederic had neglected to punish: "But, my

²⁶ Pfeffel. Hist. d'Allem. p. 324.

“son,” it goes on, “reflect with what
“pleasure thy mother, the holy Roman church,
“received thee; how kindly she treated thee; what
“*a plenitude of dignity and honor she conferred upon*
“*thee*; and how, most freely, *giving the*
“*imperial crown*, she strove to cherish thee in
“her bosom, and to comply with all thy
“wishes. Nor are we sorry: even had thy
“excellency received greater *favours (beneficia)*
“from our hands, with reason we should rejoice.”

— The unqualified address, when interpreted to the German nobles, raised a general murmur, and they repeated the words with indignation. “And from whom then,” exclaimed Orlando, “has he the empire, if not from our lord, “the pope?” Otho, count Palatine of Bavaria, laid his hand on his sword: but the presence of Frederic stilled the tumult, and the legates were commanded to depart²⁷. He then published a manifesto, which states the conduct of the legates, and the insult offered to the imperial dignity, which is asserted to be derived alone from God and from the free election of the German people.

On the return of the cardinals, the Roman court was alarmed and divided; and Adrian addressed a brief to the prelates of Germany,

²⁷ Murat. ex Radevic. an. 1157.

wherein having said how outrageously his ministers had been insulted, he exhorts them to admonish their master to turn from his evil purposes; and he speaks of the solid basis of the Roman church, which no storms shall ever move. — The reply of the prelates is firm, respectful, and dignified. “The expressions,” they say, “which your legates uttered, we “neither dare, nor can, approve; for, before “that day, such language had not been heard.” They repeat their master’s answer to the remonstrance which, at his holiness’s desire, they had made to him: which is, That he gave all due honor to the papal chair; that he received the crown he wore from the favor of heaven, which the prelates and princes of the empire had confirmed to him; that by the archbishop of Cologne he had been anointed king, and crowned emperor by the Roman bishop; that all pretensions beyond this ceremony were abusive; in a word, that he would sooner lay down his diadem than suffer it thus to be reduced and vilified. To these sentiments, they say, themselves subscribe. — The firmness of the reply, and the unexpected concord between Frederic and his bishops, awed into milder thoughts the high spirit of Adrian. He was informed, besides, that he meditated a second journey into Italy. Other ministers were, therefore, dispatched

with instructions better adapted to allay animosities; and in the name of the pontiff and their court, with a voice and attitude which spoke submission, they saluted Frederic. The letter they brought was read. It stated, in becoming language, the pontiff's esteem for the emperor; the anxiety his displeasure had caused him; the indignity offered to his legates for words, which the meanest of his subjects might have heard without emotion. It explained the exceptionable clauses of the brief: that by *favor* (*beneficium*) was meant a *good deed*, and not a *fief*, as by some it had been malevolently interpreted; that by *giving the imperial crown* was only expressed the action of placing it on his head; and that this action, surely, must by all men be termed a good deed or *beneficium*²². The artful comment was accepted: Frederic was appeased, and dismissing the legates, he gave them a kiss, the signal of reconciliation to them and to their master.

At the head of a vast army, the emperor now returned into Lombardy. The Milanese, regardless of his threats, had continued to provoke his indignation. Impatiently they had borne the yoke of a foreign prince; and it was even said, that they looked to independence, and to sovereignty over the other states and cities. Thus

²² Radev. an. 1158.

has a contemporary writer, the uncle to Frederic, and therefore their enemy, portrayed the character of the Lombards. “ At this time, they retained
 “ no resemblance of their barbarous ancestors;
 “ rather, in their conversation and polite manners,
 “ they might be compared with the old Romans.
 “ So high was their sense of liberty, that they
 “ would not submit to the government of one
 “ man; and they annually chose their consuls,
 “ or first magistrates, from the three orders of
 “ the state, that a perfect equality might level
 “ all distinction. To increase the number of
 “ their citizens, the towns compelled all lords
 “ and gentlemen of their districts to reside within
 “ their walls, and to submit to their authority;
 “ and they permitted the lowest artisans to bear
 “ arms, a practice not seen in Germany. The
 “ cities of Italy thus became more rich and
 “ powerful, than those of other kingdoms: but
 “ also they were proud, and had little respect
 “ for their liege sovereign. With pain they saw
 “ him enter Italy; and only an armed force
 “ could secure obedience to his injunctions.
 “ Such especially was Milan, the first of these
 “ cities, haughty and refractory, whose strength
 “ was great, and whose fighting men were
 “ numerous. Some of the neighbouring towns
 “ she had subjected to her control ”.

²⁹ Otto de Freisingen, Vita Frid.

As the army advanced, Brescia fell before it; when assembling his ministers and the great lawyers of Italy, Frederic summoned the Milanese before him, and having pronounced the sentence of *Ban* or proscription against them, he commanded his forces to march. By this time, Parma, Cremona, Pavia, Asti, Vercelli, Como, Padua, Verona, Ferrara, Ravenna, Reggio, Modena, Bologna, with many towns of Tuscany, had joined him with more than a hundred thousand men. Milan could yet cope with this mighty host. She trusted to the strength of her walls, to the height of her towers, to the depth of her ditches full of water; but most to the valor of her citizens. Feats of great hardihood were achieved on both sides; but after some weeks, bread began to fail within the walls, and disorders raged. The district of Milan, at the same time, with all its castles, was laid waste; and not a tree or vine remained standing on its fertile plains. In this distress, the besieged capitulated, Frederic having offered conditions, to which in honor they could accede. The principal were; that they should give three hundred hostages, that the choice of their consuls should be confirmed by the emperor, and that the great regal rights (*regalia*) should belong to him¹⁰.

In the same year, 1158, another meeting was

¹⁰ Radev. ib. Chron. Ursperg. p. 298.

convened on the plain of Roncaglia, the design of which was to revive the ancient rights of the crown of Italy, and to fix their limits. Consuls from all the cities were present, and four doctors from Bologna, renowned for legal science. To these the important question was proposed. Whether interest, or adulation, or fear, or truth, most influenced their judgments, is not said; but their decision was unanimous and peremptory. that the claims of Frederic were paramount; that the great fiefs and all jurisdiction emanated from the imperial crown; that the sovereign rights unalienably belonged to him; in a word, that he was monarch of the territory. The doctrine might be agreeable to the ancient usages of Italy; but it did not apply to the circumstances of the times. — Awed by the decision, or more by the presence of a formidable army, the lords and magistrates then surrendered their rights into the hands of Frederic, whom the acclamations of his German courtiers, and the maxims of the schools, had almost persuaded, that he was sovereign master of the world. Thus closed the memorable diet of Roncaglia, and with it, for a short time, the boasted liberties of the Lombard states³¹.

On the death of Roger II. in 1154, his son, William the bad, succeeded to the throne of the Sicilies. It was an extensive territory, comprising

Sicily.

³¹ Murat. *ibid.* Pfeffel, p. 328.

the island of Sicily, and in Italy, the provinces of Apulia and Calabria. William bore no resemblance to his noble progenitors, the princes, of the Norman line, who, by their prowess alone, had founded a kingdom, and whose conduct gave splendor to the diadem³². He possessed personal courage; but was, in other regards, weak, cruel, profligate, indolent. His favorites governed, and the people suffered; while rebellions, plots, and bloodshed filled up the measure of his reign³³. Still it was the interest of Rome to gain the friendship of a tyrant, whose power might be some barrier against the encroachments of Frederic, and Adrian courted and obtained the alliance of William. The continental possessions of the Sicilian crown were held under vassalage of the see of Rome, and mutual protection became necessary to both. It had entered into the plans of Frederic, when an occasion should offer, to attempt the subjugation of Sicily. An alluring prospect thus opened before him. The cities of Lombardy reduced, and the sceptre of Sicily torn from the hand of a weak monarch, what remained to complete his wishes? He would restore to its proper level the assumed prerogative of the pontiff, and from Rome once more give law to the

³² Introduc. to Abeil. vol. i. p. xlix.

³³ Murat. p. 569.

subject world. It will be seen how far the glittering dream was realized.

An event, trifling, as it may appear, in itself, Rome but in its consequences most serious, and which, for eighteen years, engaged the attention, and divided the politics of christendom, now calls our thoughts. It was the election of Orlando de Sienna, cardinal priest of St. Mark, (whom the reader lately saw at Befançon,) to the chair of St. Peter. Three days after the death of Adrian, which happened on the first of September, 1159, the cardinals assembling, chose Orlando, who took the name of Alexander III. But three of their order, Octavian of St. Cecily, John of St. Martin, and Guido of St. Calixtus, dissented, and the two latter nominated Octavian, who called himself Victor IV. — In a moment, the church of St. Peter was a scene of the wildest confusion. The electors of Orlando put on his shoulders the scarlet mantle, (which was considered as the ceremony of investment,) whilst he resisted, and retiring declared his unworthiness. But Octavian seized the sacred ornament; and when his violence was opposed, turning to his chaplain, he called for a mantle which he had ordered him to have in readiness. He threw it precipitately round his shoulders. The doors were opened, and bodies of armed men entered³⁴.

³⁴ Acta Alex. ap. Baron. Radev. c. 51.

In tumults and mutual altercations the scene continued, in Rome and its neighbourhood, till the twentieth; when Alexander, who had withdrawn to some distance, was consecrated, and solemnly crowned by the cardinal bishop of Ostia, amidst the acclamations of a numerous clergy, and crowds of senators and of the Roman people. — Some days afterwards, Victor likewise was consecrated by the cardinal bishop of Tuscum.

To form a just idea of the characters of these competitors, before their exaltation to the papacy, is not easy. They were both high in the estimation of Adrian, and of his predecessor, Eugenius, and were both employed in important commissions: but Orlando was the greater and better man. He possessed a natural eloquence, was versed in literature, and knowing the world, had the address of a courtier, and the judgment of a statesman. He was beneficent and mild, temperate and forbearing, prudent and unirrascible; but firm and perseverant. In circumstances less turbulent, Orlando had been a treasure to the church; yet in those very circumstances, no one, it may be said, could have acted better. When the tiara was first presented to him, he put it by, as it seemed, with unaffected humility; but no sooner had it touched his brows, than he adhered to it with the pertinacity of a man, who, through

life, should have made it the object of all his pursuits. — Octavian was ambitious. Noble as he was by birth, this passion had been pardonable, had he attempted its gratification by honorable means. His virtues were few; and as the qualities of his mind were not great, so were his acquirements proportionable. He had experience, however, and was versed in policy and court-intrigue. By the latter he deemed it possible to make his way to power; and he sought for power through dissensions and strife. Had Alexander been unopposed, general harmony would have given strength to his government, and success to his plans. This harmony Octavian violated. The blow was fatal to the peace of the church, and the execrations of millions followed him to the grave". — As the portraits are taken from the charged sketches of prejudiced historians, their future conduct will best delineate the real characters of the men.

Aware that he would be inclined to countenance his rival, Alexander, after his enthronation, dispatched nuncios to Frederic, who was in Lombardy, informing him of his promotion, and requesting his friendship. With difficulty he was persuaded to see them; but he returned no answer. — The cardinals in the interest of Alex-

³⁵ Acta ap. Baron. Muratori, &c.

ander, twenty-two in number, likewise wrote to Frederic. They related the circumstances of the two elections, as given above; and they entreated him, as protector of the church, to espouse her interest, and not to patronize Octavian, the schismatical invader of her holy see³⁶.

Victor was more successful. In a letter, addressed to the bishops and nobles at Frederic's court, he reminded them of the friendship he had ever manifested to their master and to them; and he entreated their good offices, at the perilous moment, when Peter's ship was shaken by the storm, and the imperial dignity was itself threatened to be obscured. He mentioned his promotion, without detailing its circumstances, which was effected, he said, by the choice of the cardinals, the petition of the clergy, and with the consent of the senators and the people. "But should
" any address come to you from Orlando," he concluded, "once chancellor of the Roman
" see, whom a conspiracy against the church and
" the empire has devoted to William of Sicily,
" and who, the twelfth day after our election,
" forced himself into our chair, reject it as full
" of lies, and as written by a heretic".—"But the cardinals of his faction, who now were five,

³⁶ Acta ap. Bar. Muratori, &c.

³⁷ Acta et Radevic. ib.

in a letter directed also to the emperor's court, entered more fully on the question. They observed; that since Adrian, in 1156, formed an alliance with the king of Sicily, there had been divisions in the sacred college; that when Frederic with an armed force first entered Italy, the friends to the Sicilian had urged Adrian to excommunicate him, which blow they (the present party of Victor) had warded off; that the same faction had solemnly engaged themselves, ever to oppose the measures of the emperor, and to raise no one to the papacy whose sentiments should differ from their own; that, after the interment of Adrian, both parties, notwithstanding, had consented to meet; and by an unanimous, vote to elect his successor; that the Sicilian faction, on the third day, violating this agreement, had chosen Orlando, and that themselves, at that crisis, had voted for Octavian; that, in spite of every remonstrance, when they saw them preparing to clothe their favorite, (but had not done it,) they had brought forward Octavian, and investing him with the scarlet mantle, had placed him in the chair, with the applause of the people, the clergy, the senate, and the nobles; that the faction with Orlando first retired to the castle, where they remained more than eight days, and then quitting Rome, withdrew to Cisterna; that here, on the twelfth

day only, they first clothed him, and on the following Sunday performed his consecration; that, some days after that, on the first Sunday in October, Octavian received his consecration, having, on the day of election, in the church of St. Peter, been canonically invested with the mantle ³⁸.

Frederic, thus made umpire, as it seemed, between the contending factions, with the advice of his friends, resolved to convene a general synod. The measure did not exceed the limits of his power, as it had been before practised; and by what other means could the controversy be decided? Deputies were, therefore, named to wait on the popes, citing them to appear before the council. He wrote to Alexander, and to the cardinals of his party, and to the prelates of the empire and the principal kingdoms of Europe. He tells Alexander, whom he calls Orlando, and his cardinals, that to terminate the schism which had risen in the church, he, as the guardian of her laws, had purposed to call a synod at Pavia, where the prelates of christendom should meet, and bring the point to issue. He commands them to obey the summons, and offers them a safe-conduct. Should they refuse; God, he says, shall judge between them,

³⁸ Acta et Radevic. ib.

and he, as becomes the majesty of the Roman emperor, will maintain the cause of justice. "God is my witness," he concludes, "not led by love or hatred to any man, I seek only his honor and the unity of his church".

He tells the bishops of christendom, that the cardinals of Rome having chosen two heads to the church, he had deemed it his duty to oppose the evils which must ensue; that, agreeably to the judgment of the wisest and best men, and to the decrees of former popes, and the ecclesiastical canons, he had ordered a council to meet at Pavia; and that Orlando and Octavian were cited to appear before it. He then begs the attendance of each bishop, requesting they will come with a candid mind, having permitted no prejudication to influence their decision.

The deputies, arriving at Anagni, where Alexander was, entered the palace, and without ceremony, took their seats in his presence. They then announced their commission, and gave him the emperor's letter. His friends were round him. As the letter was read, terror and perplexity gathered on their countenances. On one side, the anger of Frederic menaced; and the liberty of the church, on the other, seemed exposed to

" Acta et Radevic. ib.

" Ibid.

danger. Finally, however, they resolved, after long deliberation, not to desert the cause of Alexander and the church, whatever perils they might incur; when himself rose before the deputies and spoke:

“ I admit, he said, that the emperor is the
“ advocate and the guardian of the Roman church,
“ and I am disposed to show him honor above
“ the princes of the earth, when the honor of
“ the king of kings is not concerned. Surprised
“ I am then, that he should have disregarded
“ my honor, and transgressed the respectful
“ limits of his predecessors, in convening a synod
“ without my participation, and citing me before
“ it. To St. Peter, and through him to the church
“ of Rome, Christ gave this privilege, that she
“ definitively should judge the disputes of other
“ churches, herself unjudged by all. And her
“ protector shall now himself infringe this privilege!
“ Canonical tradition and the venerable authority
“ of the fathers, permit me not to go to his
“ court, or to submit to his award. Princes, in
“ other kingdoms, take not to themselves the
“ cognizance of such causes: they refer them to
“ their metropolitans, or to the apostolic see.
“ Highly culpable, then, should I be, if, from
“ ignorance or want of courage, I permitted the
“ evil to begin at the head, and the church to
“ be enthralled. To support this liberty our

“ fathers spilt their blood; and, should the times
“ require it, I also, after their example, am
“ ready to bare my breast to danger “.

The delegates heard the bold address, and leaving Alexander, repaired to Octavian at Segni. He received them with much kindness; and they saluted him with the usual ceremony, prostrate at his feet.—The views and inclinations of Frederic were thus at once manifested, and it appeared how little he regarded the advice of dispassionate judgment, which, with seeming candor, he had inculcated to others.—Victor, with great alacrity, received his proposal, and consented to submit his cause to the voice of the council “.

Such were the first acts of this extraordinary event, which, the more it is examined and detailed in its various parts, the more it seems involved in darkness. The scattered rays of truth, which on other occasions, the historian thinks he can collect, are here all dissipated, as if the language of party and its most solemn statements were the less to be credited, the more they bore the semblance of honor and veracity. — Alexander, in refusing to appear before Frederic's council, and to await its sentence, acted most

“ Acta, ap. Baron.

“ Acta, ib.

impolitically. He should have known that the measure was not unprecedented, and therefore not inconsistent with the dignity of the station, to which he deemed himself canonically raised. How else was the schism to be terminated? And who so competent to interfere as the emperor Frederic? That he was not his friend, Alexander, indeed, knew; and he might fear his preponderating influence. Still, as the majority of votes had rendered his election cononical, he should have met his enemies with confidence. The haughty language he assumed, was dictated by the spirit which Gregory VII. had raised in the church⁴³; but in the emergency of a competitor, at least, it ill became Alexander; it irritated the emperor; and was a cause of triumph to his opponents.

Victor's conduct was guided by a better policy. What truth there was in the circumstances of his election, as exhibited by his friends, cannot be ascertained; but himself seemed not inclined to rely too confidently on them. With Frederic on his side, he had reason to imagine that his cause, though weak, might finally prevail; nor would he deprive it of any adventitious strength, which lay within his own reach to give it. His will should be a law to

⁴³ Hist. of Abeil. p. 24.

him; he would meet him in his synod at Pavia; and profess to abide its sentence. The good sense of this determination created him many friends, and it gave an air of sincerity to his proceedings, which the cause wanted, and which the outset of the business, as generally understood, was not calculated to produce.

On the behaviour of Frederic, which many historians, partial to Alexander, have severely censured, much might be said. Agreeably to the plan he had laid for the subjugation of Italy, a pontiff, not averse from his general schemes, of some pliancy of character, and not too elate with the notions of prerogative, it was natural he should wish to patronize. To him Alexander was personally obnoxious, and he might well suspect that the sacred college meant a pointed insult, when they raised him to the chair; for he it was, who, but the year before, in the diet at Besançon, had braved him to his beard. Perhaps also there was truth in the report, that a plot, in favor of the Sicilian king, had been formed against him, and that, in consequence thereof, the votes fell on Orlando. The treaty with William of Sicily was a fact of notoriety. These things considered, a prince, less vindictive and less ambitious than Frederic was, may be allowed to have favored the rival of his enemy, particularly when it could be done under the

show of equity and the love of order. Let it also be added, that so complicated was the story of the election, in its different views, and which the council of Pavia, as will be seen, did not at all elucidate, that, without any previous bias, a man of real sincerity might have erred. That the elections of both were irregular, I have no doubt; but the reception of the christian world, at length, gave validity to that of Alexander. Frederic, in the mean while, was strenuous for his friend, and prepared for the synod of Pavia. It was the end of the year 1159.

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
R E I G N
O F
K I N G H E N R Y T H E S E C O N D .

B O O K I

Council of Pavia. — Alexander and Victor. — Henry and Louis. — War in Lombardy. — Alexander retires to France. — Becket chosen archbishop of Canterbury. — Change in his life and manners. — Council of Tours. — Dispute between Henry and his bishops. — Conduct of the primate. — Meeting at Clarendon. — Its constitutions. — Becket repents of his weakness. — The king applies to Alexander. — Becket attempts to leave the kingdom. — Death of Victor, and the affairs of Lombardy. — Meeting at Northampton. — Brief account of the Anglo-Norman government and polity. — Power of the king. — National council. — King's court. — County court. — Revenue of the crown. — Army. — Navy. — Laws. — Degrees of nobility. — Inferior ranks and bondmen.

AS the kingdoms of Europe were all engaged in the business of the schism, the other concerns of policy or religion, of war or peace, seemed

B O O K
I.

BOOK
I.

to be absorbed in it. Ambassadors were sent to the courts, particularly of the English and French kings, and secret emissaries were employed, by both parties, to forward their respective interests. The kings, in the conflict of such various opinions, prudently withheld their judgment: the bishops, as character or interest directed, precipitately engaged, or waited till time or better documents should clear the uncertain medium; and the people, as their teachers inclined, were sometimes for Victor, and sometimes for Alexander. The decision of Europe hung in suspense; but Frederic, who felt a nearer interest, and who moved on the scene, had wisely planned his measures; and he now announced the opening of the council at Pavia for the fifth of February.

1160.
Council of
Pavia.

It assembled. Not more than fifty prelates were there from Germany and the Italian states; but abbots and other religious superiors exceeded calculation'. Delegates from different nations, from France and England, were also there. Frederic took his seat, and spoke: "Although, " as emperor, I know that I have authority to " convene councils, particularly when the church " is thus exposed to danger, (for so did Constantine " and many of my predecessors;) yet to you, " fathers, I intrust the decision of this important " business. The Almighty has made you his

' Radev. c. 64.

“ ministers, and he gave you power to judge
 “ me. In the concerns of religion I pretend not
 “ to interfere : conduct yourselves, therefore,
 “ and decide in this affair, as having only God
 “ for your judge.” He pronounced the solemn
 address, and withdrew, leaving the synod to free
 deliberation ². Victor was present.

B O O K

I.

1160.

For seven days the question was debated, when
 Victor, whose cause had been powerfully sup-
 ported, was declared duly elected ; and they
 condemned Alexander, who, having been cano-
 nically cited, had contumaciously, it was said,
 refused to appear ³.

The mass of evidence brought before the council,
 by the heads of the Roman clergy, and other
 persons of distinction, who solemnly declared
 they had been witnesses to every transaction, all
 tended to prove, that Octavian was invested with
 the scarlet mantle, and publicly enthroned in
 the chair of St. Peter, at the petition of the people,
 and with the consent of the clergy, in the
 presence even of Orlando, and unopposed by
 him and his friends, eleven days before the
 election of the latter. The circumstantial evidence
 is recorded by the historian, who assisted at the
 synod ⁴.

The sentence of the council was carried to the
 emperor, who received it with respect, and

² Radev. c. 64. ³ Ib. c. 65. ⁴ Radevic. in Frid.

BOOK approved it. Victor was then conducted to the
I. church, surrounded by the clergy, and proclaimed
1160. by the people, *sovereign pontiff and universal pope*. Frederic waited at the door, and bowed as he approached; then taking him by the hand, he led him to his seat, and kneeling kissed his slipper'.— Soon afterwards he wrote to the archbishop of Saltzburgh and his suffragans, informing them of the events of the council, and insisting principally on the conspiracy formed against himself, during the life of Adrian, as I have related, in consequence of which, he says, Alexander had been chosen; and of that conspiracy, he adds, fresh evidence had appeared. — This circumstance, as we learn from other letters written to the same German prelate, and the non-appearance of Alexander, operated principally in favor of Victor. It was prudently apprehended, should the nomination of the former be confirmed, that discord would for ever divide the empire and the church'.

A circular letter was also sent to every christian state by the presidents of the council. They detail its principal circumstances, and conclude with a prayer, that the sentence pronounced at Pavia may be received by the universal church, as fixed and irrevocable.

' Radevic. c. 71, 72.

' Id.

Alexander

Alexander, in the mean time, furrounded by his friends at Anagni, waited unabashed the issue of the meeting. A sentence of excommunication had been pronounced against him at Pavia, but he was prepared to meet it. He called on Frederic to repent, and when he was deaf to his admonitions, him he excommunicated: he renewed the censure against Victor and his adherents: and, in imitation of some of his predecessors, he absolved from their allegiance the subjects of the empire⁷. Legates were then sent to the different courts, and into the east, and to Constantinople. The representations from Pavia were thus powerfully counteracted. They insisted that the right of election, by the constitution and canons of the church, resided in the college of cardinals, a great majority of whom had elected Alexander; that the story of Victor's investiture, as exhibited by his friends, was a notorious fable; that the meeting at Pavia was rather a German diet, called by the emperor, who had previously espoused Octavian, and which was devoted to his interest, and awed by a military force; that deputies from Alexander would have gone to Pavia, not to submit to its sentence, but to relate the circumstances of his election, could it have been done without the peril of their lives; that were the characters of the competitors impartially viewed, every friend

B O O K

I.

1160.

Alexander
and
Victor.⁷ Acta Alex. ap. Baron.

B O O K to virtue and religion would declare for Alexander,
I. and reject with horror the impudent and daring
1160. Victor^a.

In England and France great exertions were made, and Alexander at last triumphed. Their ambassadors at Pavia had prudently given no opinion; but by the activity, principally of the bishop of Lisieux, a learned man, and in great favor with Henry, whose subject he was, the cause of Alexander was rapidly promoted in all the dominions of the two kings. It was much the interest of both that no religious controversy should divide their subjects. The emperor had some interest in the mind of Henry, and he had even sent his chancellor into France, that the most marked attention might give weight to the sentence of the council. It did not succeed. The kings proceeded with great deliberation; but they were not disposed to patronize the schemes of Frederic, of whose power they had already ample reason to be jealous, and they rather despised the pious affectation and the unseemly interference of him and his German soldiers, in the concerns of the church. They took the sense of their clergy, in two separate meetings, in both of which the election of Alexander was declared to be canonical. At the same time, by the king's order, a council was held in England, which

^a Baron. an. 1160.

ended in the same decision. On this Alexander was publicly acknowledged, and both churches, with their kings, submitted to his authority'.—The bishop of Lisieux relates, that so great a horror had Henry of the person of Octavian, that when a letter from that schismatic was presented to him, he would not touch it with his hand; but receiving it on a chip, which he picked from the dust, he threw it violently behind his back, to the great amusement of the spectators.

We have not yet done with the first transactions of this memorable quarrel. The following year, 1161, two other councils were convened. At Toulouse, the two kings, willing to give greater solemnity to the cause they had espoused, accompanied by their barons, met the prelates and abbots of their realms. Ambassadors from the emperor and the king of Spain attended, and legates from the popes. Cardinal Guido of Crema, the elector of Victor, and now, with John of St. Martin, his representative at Toulouse, was first heard. He spoke with eloquence, and with much address supported his master's cause. Cardinal William of Pavia, one of Alexander's legates, replied. He had the character of a great orator, but the sincerity of his attachment to what was deemed the orthodox party, had been suspected.

' Joan. Sarisb. ep. 64, 65. Arnulp. ep. ap. Baron. Neubrig. l. 2. c. 9.

BOOK On a visit to his friends at Pavia, during the
I. celebration of the synod, he assisted at it, and did
1161. not oppose the torrent, though truth and justice,
 it was said, were carried down in the stream ¹⁰.
 He was now more active. He refuted the arguments of his adversary, and laid the evidence of truth before the eyes of the council. Alexander was declared to have been canonically chosen; the kings confirmed the sentence; and Victor with his associates was again anathematized ¹¹.

In revenge, another meeting was convened at Lodi by Victor and Frederic, wherein the proceedings of Pavia were confirmed, and a long list of censures pronounced against the adverse party. It was as numerously attended, and as respectable, as that of Toulouse ¹². — Thus in mutual recriminations, and the horrid war of anathemas, passed the first years of this inauspicious period. Alexander resided at Anagni, in the territories of the Sicilian king; for he could not enter Rome, where a powerful faction opposed him: and Victor was generally in the court of Frederic, whom great concerns still detained in Lombardy.

As yet the interests of the rival popes were not unequally poised. On the side of Alexander were the kingdoms of France, of England, of Spain, as far as the christian interest then extended,

¹⁰ Baron. an. 1160. ¹¹ Neubrig. c. 9.

¹² Chron. Lauden. sub an. 1161.

and of Sicily. — With Victor stood the empire with its dependent states, and the northern kingdoms of Denmark and Norway. — Rome itself was rather with Victor; and on each side were many inferior states and prelates, of whom some remained neutral, while others, uninfluenced by the judgment of the majority, chose to think for themselves. — But it must not be forgotten, that the Latin church in Palestine adhered to Alexander, and that even the Grecian emperor of Constantinople, with his patriarchs, princes, bishops, clergy, and people acknowledged the legality of his election, though they rejected his communion, and ridiculed his claim to supremacy over the eastern church. Alexander had solicited the vain approbation. Emanuel Comnenus could not remain a mere spectator, while a question of some magnitude agitated the western world; and besides, he was jealous of the spreading honors of Frederic, and idly projected, as will be seen, to strengthen his feeble arm by the recovery of nominal empire.

While Henry and Louis, with uncommon accord, thus labored to pacify Europe, or perhaps only to thwart the machinations of Frederic, other events had engaged their attention. Louis lost Constantia, his second queen; and as a male heir was still wanting to the throne, (for she also had left two daughters only,) the lords of the council urged him again to marry. Pliant and

B O O K

I.

1161.

Henry and
Louis.

B O O K condescending as he was, in less than fourteen
I. days, he took to his arms Adelaide, the sister of
1161. the earl of Champagne, whose brothers were the
counts of Blois and Sancerre. The connexion
displeased Henry. The earls were nephews to
Stephen, late king of England, who could not
be his friends, as he had dispossessed their family
of a throne; and the elevation of their sister would
naturally draw them nearer to Louis, and give
them weight in his councils.

I have related what were the conditions of the
marriage-treaty between the eldest son of Henry
and the daughter of the French king¹³. She was
to be educated under the eye of her future father,
and the castles of Gisors, Neufle, and Neuchatel
were appointed for her dower. In the subsequent
treaty of peace, it seems to have been stipulated,
that the whole Norman Vexin, with the castles,
should be surrendered to Henry, for the use of
his son, within three years, or sooner, if the parties
should be *espoused with the consent of the church*¹⁴.
Henry was now desirous that it should be no
longer in the power of Louis to revoke the contract.
The new connexion he had made gave rise to
some anxiety, as the prince and princess were as
yet infants, and he saw that the politics of France
might soon be turned into another channel.

¹³ Page 10.

¹⁴ Life of Hen. vol. ii. p. 116.

The legates of Alexander were in France. To them the English monarch applied for a dispensation, which would at once remove the objection that might be drawn from the infant state of the parties, and effectually establish the necessary condition, *the consent of the church*. It is well known of what consequence, at that critical moment, were to Alexander the support and good will of Henry. To have refused his petition was dangerous, and yet to grant it might be displeasing to Louis. But the legates were aware, which of the two monarchs could be most easily ruled, and they granted the dispensation. The French king, we are told, was scandalized at their too easy conduct¹¹; but probably he was not less affected to find himself thus over-reached, as he might think, by the politic prince, and be compelled to surrender the important forts, which, in the ordinary course of things, should have remained longer in his power. The nuptials between the infants were celebrated; and Henry demanded the castles, which were instantly delivered into his hands, by the knights templars, to whose custody they had been committed. — Though in the transaction, considering the tenor of the treaty, there might be nothing fraudulent; yet honorable surely it was not, and little did it accord with that open and manly spirit, which,

BOOK

I.

1161.

¹¹ Arnulp. ep. 23.

B O O K as historians too encomiastic have proclaimed,
I. uniformly animated the breast of Henry. The
1161. writers, most contemporary with the event, represent it in colors not favorable to their king, and seem to have known nothing of the extraordinary clause in the second treaty, which I mentioned ¹⁶.

The honest Louis, roused by the insult, with his usual impetuosity, flew to arms. His new relations joined in the quarrel, and fortifying Chaumont, a castle bordering on Touraine, threatened from thence to lay waste the territory of the enemy. The enemy was prepared, and with uncommon alertness frustrated their designs. In the Norman Vexin, the two armies often approached within fight, and as often retired. They feared one another; and this was a moment for the mediation of friends. The legates interfered, and a truce was concluded ¹⁷. — If these servants of an ambitious master, sedulous to extend the vain prerogative of his court, be accused of sowing discord, and of breaking asunder the sacred tie which binds the prince and the people, also it must be said that, often they were heralds of peace, and obstructed, by their mediation, the effusion of human blood.

¹⁶ Neubrig. c. 24. Hoveden. an. 1161.

¹⁷ Chron. Norman. an. 1161, Neubrig. c. 24.

Frederic also, though pledged to support the schism, would not permit it to engross his thoughts. The plan he had formed for the subjugation of Lombardy, he pursued unremittingly. His officers by their exactions daily irritated the proud republicans, and it did not seem that either they or their master were disposed to comply with the terms on which Milan had capitulated. The utter subversion of their liberty, they had reason to apprehend, could alone gratify the ambitious monarch. He commanded the Milanese to suppress their consuls, and to accept magistrates from him; and because Crema was their ally, he insisted that they should level their walls, and fill up their ditches. Neither of them obeyed the imperious mandate. They had no resource but in their arms. The Milanese, in great force, left their walls, and falling suddenly on Trezzo, a castle where the emperor's money was kept, they took it by storm, seized his treasure, and with it a strong garrison of German soldiers¹⁸.

The impress Beatrix, duke Henry the Lion, and other princes, now joined the imperial standard, with great reinforcements. For agreeably to the military service, in the feudal system, an army of vassals, like the ocean, perpetually ebbed and flowed. Thus strengthened, he marched, in fury, against Crema. Fourteen hundred

BOOK

I.

1161.

War in
Lombardy.

¹⁸ Radevic. an. 1160.

B O O K I. 1161. Milanese had, in the mean time, flown to the succour of their friends. Prodigies of valor, says the historian who viewed the siege from the emperor's camp, were done on both sides; and the machines of war, then employed to throw stones, caused dreadful devastation. The men of Cremona, who fought for Frederic, and whose animosity against the besieged was great, filling two hundred casks with earth, rolled them into the ditch, and on them pushed forward a wooden castle. It overlooked the walls. A shower of broken rocks from the enemy instantly thundered on its sides, and it tottered to the lowest planks. Frederic ordered the hostages, he had before received from Crema, and Milanese prisoners, of noble blood, to be exposed, bound, on the summit of the tower. The besieged viewed the horrid spectacle, but did not relent in their exertions. Nine of the unfortunate men were slain, when the survivors were withdrawn from the slaughter. A scene of dreadful retaliation ensued. The German and other prisoners were brought out on the walls, and butchered in the sight of Frederic and his army. In such bloodshed and cruel feats did the siege continue for almost six months, and no efforts of the assailants could abate the resistance of these desperate men. But their chief engineer deserted to the enemy; and fatigue, sleepless nights, and unwholesome food, wore them down.

They implored the mediation of duke Henry, a prince humane and generous, as Frederic was relentless and severe, and of Peregrinus, patriarch of Aquileia, the fast friend to Victor and his cause. But they could only obtain, that the allies should quit the place unarmed, and the inhabitants of Crema with what each could carry. "They bad
 " their last adieu to those walls they had so nobly
 " defended, and came out bearing on their
 " shoulders what they held most dear, their
 " infants, their infirm wives, and aged parents." Crema was then pillaged; and the fire and the hammer soon laid it in the dust¹⁹.

BOOK
 I.
 1161.

Milan was yet unconquered. The emperor, with his Italian allies, fell upon their territories; but they every where resisted, and meeting him in the field, they defeated part of his army, and forced himself to retire. The period of service being expired, the German vassals, as usual, after the destruction of Crema, had gone home. In spring they returned, and with them many more princes and prelates, at the head of their contingent of troops. His brother Conrad came; Frederic, his cousin, duke of Suabia, the landgrave of Hesse; and the son of the king of Bohemia. No one shone more brilliant than Rinaldo, the newly elected archbishop of Cologne, who marched with five hundred horse. Thus reinforced,

¹⁹ Radev. *ibid.* Laudense Chron. an. 1160. Murat. *ibid.*

BOOK I. Frederic once more turned his face towards Milan,
 1161. and on the last days of March, 1161, encompassed
 it with his mighty host ²⁰.

Experience had now taught him, that his machines against the walls of Milan would be spent in useless rage; that the courage of its citizens was unfurmountable; and that hunger and distress could alone subdue them. As he had done before, he therefore, fifteen miles round, destroyed all the produce of the earth, and so guarded the passes that not the smallest aid could enter. He himself sat down at Lodi, a town in the neighbourhood, expecting, with sullen impatience, the dreadful effect of his measures. The effect soon took place. Want of provisions created famine, and famine pestilence. Deputies waited on the emperor, offering on the part of the citizens, to beat down their walls, and to fill their ditches. "You shall surrender" at discretion; said he, advised to it by some of the princes, but chiefly by his Italian allies, who hated Milan. The next day, the four consuls came; and they swore on their swords, which were naked in their hands, to do the will of Frederic, and promised that the people should swear the same. Early on the next morning, five hundred horsemen advanced with the

²⁰ Auctores ut supra.

banners and keys of the city, and laid them at the conqueror's feet. He demanded four hundred hostages; while twelve commissioners were sent to receive from the people the promised oath of submission. With his court he then proceeded to Pavia, whence an order was dispatched to the consuls that, "within eight days, the citizens, men and women, evacuate the city." The order was complied with. The nobility and principal inhabitants retired to the neighbouring towns: but the poor, and the disconsolate populace, loitered about the monasteries which were built near the walls, hoping that some pity might be left in the victor's breast, and that they should be permitted to return to their houses. The next day, he entered Milan with his troops, and, on a signal, consigned it to general pillage. Nothing was spared; not the wealth of the citizens, nor the ornaments of the churches. This done, he pronounced the last fatal decree, that "the city be destroyed to its foundations."

But desirous, probably, that the odium of the savage work should not fall on his Germans, he intrusted its execution to his Lombard soldiers, and allotted to each division the several quarters of the town. With the ferocity of their ancestors, and the vengeance of more than human hatred, they performed their commission. They were the men of Pavia, of Cremona, of Lodi, of

BOOK

I.

1161.

Novara, and of Como. The proud palaces of Milan, its churches, its ancient monuments, and its walls with a hundred towers, soon lay prostrate in the dust. The metropolitan church of St. Ambrose was alone permitted to stand; but the Gothic ravager ordered its tower to be lowered, which for its height and exquisite workmanship had been viewed with admiring wonder. The body of the church was much injured by its fall. On the following Sunday, which was the last of lent, Frederic entered this awful temple he had sacrilegiously profaned, and, with affected devotion, amidst its ruins, received the blessed olive-branch from the hand of the officiating minister. He returned to Pavia, where, in solemn pomp, he kept his easter, and appeared before the people crowned with the imperial diadem. Two years before he had vowed never to wear it more, till Milan should be vanquished. The news of its destruction spread a general terror, and the towns of Italy trembled at the name of Barbarossa²¹.

Brescia, the ally of Milan, and Placentia, now voluntarily surrendered to the victor, and accepted his hard conditions. These were; to receive a magistrate from him, to level their fortifications, to give up their castles, to pay a

²¹ Murat. an. 1162 Chron. Lauden. & Ursperg, ibid.

large sum of money, and to follow him to war. B O O K
 Alike terms were prescribed to Bologna, and to I.
 other towns of less note. — Thus from the Alps 1161.
 to the gates of Rome, every city, and every
 fortress, bowed the neck to this formidable
 prince. It was time he should show his laurels
 in Germany and attend to the concerns of Victor.

I have been particular in detailing these events, because they are interesting in themselves and in their consequences; and because the contemporary historians are diffuse in their narrations. The adulatory praise they give to Frederic I would not transcribe. We learn what was his real character; we see the spirit of the Lombards, and the manner in which towns were defended and attacked. The engines they used resembled those of the ancient Romans: indeed, till the discovery of gunpowder, it could only be by battering the walls, that any impression could be made. When a breach was effected, they stormed with swords, battle-axes, and ponderous clubs of iron. But I shall afterwards have occasion to treat more distinctly of the military art of those days, in which the emperor, above the rest, seems principally to have excelled. He was emulous of a foldier's fame.

Alexander had quitted Campania, where he 1162.
 resided at Anagni, protected by the king of Alexander
 Sicily, and had returned to Rome. But the goes into
France.

BOOK I. 1162. faction of Octavian, which was powerful, the disaffection, at that time, of the Romans themselves to papal government²², and the great interest of Frederic, soon forced him to withdraw. Again he retired into Campania; and as his friends urged him to depart from a country, which no longer merited the blessing of his presence, he resolved to seek for an asylum in France. At Terracina four galleys were prepared, by his Sicilian majesty, to receive him. He appointed a vicar at Rome, and sailed. Through many perils he arrived first at Genoa, and thence, after a successful voyage landing on the French coast, he proceeded, with all his retinue, to Montpellier. On a white hackney, habited in his pontifical robes, and surrounded by a countless multitude, he entered the populous city. He was happy that could approach him. The barons of the province were there with their vassals, and the governor at the head of his troops: they advanced in order, and kissed his feet. Stricken by the unusual spectacle, a Saracen prince, who was present, with his attendants fell prostrate, and “adored the pontiff, as the god of the christians.” By an interpreter, he then addressed him in his master’s name. Alexander returned an affable answer, and with the nobles,

²² Hist. of Abeil. vol. ii. p. 174.

says

says my author, ordered him to take an honorable place at his feet²³. — Many prelates of the Gallican church soon crowded to Montpellier. Before them, Alexander harangued the people: he related the circumstances of his election, inveighed against the insolence of his enemies, and again solemnly excommunicated Octavian and his adherents.

When Louis heard that the pope was in Languedoc, he sent deputies to him. By the address of his new queen, or of her brother, the count of Champagne, who were related, it is said, to Victor, some change, it seems, had taken place in the dispositions of Louis, and of this Alexander had been apprized. He received the deputies coolly, which so far irritated the monarch, that he acquainted his brother-in-law of it, and commissioned him to wait on the emperor. The cloud soon passed over. Legates of great respect came from the pope, requesting that their master might be informed, in what part of the kingdom, it would be most agreeable to his Majesty, for him to reside. They were well received, we know; for at their return, Alexander left Montpellier, and came to Clermont in Auvergne²⁴.

²³ Acta. ap. Bar. an. 1162.

²⁴ Fleury from Duchesne, t. 4. p. 416, &c. Acta ibid.

BOOK

I.

1162.

Frederic, in the mean while, advised by the earl of Champagne, projected a solemn conference, at which the prelates and lords of both kingdoms should be present, and where the pretensions of the rival popes should again be discussed. St. Jean de Laune, on the borders of Burgundy, situated on the Saone, then the frontier of France, was thought the most proper place. The king, anxious to give peace to the church, consented to the proposal; but the artful nobleman was careful not to acquaint him with the articles of the convention he had settled with the emperor. The latter had left Italy, and now hastened towards Burgundy, escorted by a noble train of princes, prelates, and a military guard. Victor also was with him. The French king was not less splendidly attended. On the way he met Alexander, who refused to accompany him to the conference, again pleading the privilege of the Roman see. "It is strange," observed Louis, "that, feeling, as you do, the justice of your cause, you should decline this trial".

The circumstances of the conference, which ensued, are so variously related, that no accurate statement can be made. The earl of Champagne, it seems, had promised more than his master was disposed to comply with; and when the latter

²³ Fleury, from Duchesne t. iv. p. 416, &c. Acta ibid.

consented to stand to the agreement of his minister, the emperor, in his turn, receded. He saw that it would not be possible to gain the point he had in view: either to set aside both the popes, and elect a new one; or to confirm irrevocably the nomination of Victor. In feigned excuses and insincere proposals many days thus passed. The king, at last, availing himself of the non-appearance of Frederic at a certain interview, he had engaged to attend, suddenly withdrew, and the assembly was dissolved. It is also related, that the approach of the king of England, with a great force, to support the cause of Alexander, against the menaces of the emperor, contributed not a little to the abrupt termination of the conference²⁶.

Alexander, during these transactions, was at Bourgdieu, a monastery in Aquitaine, waiting, in anxious solicitude, the uncertain issue of the conference. Here he was visited by Henry, who, being informed of the event of the meeting, would proceed no further. Prostrate on the ground he kissed the feet of his holiness; then rising, he offered him rich presents of gold, and was permitted to kiss his lips. But he declined the honor of a chair, which was prepared for him, and, with his barons, took his seat on the floor. Three days he spent with Alexander,

²⁶ Acta ap. Bar. an. 1162.

B O O K and left him, much charmed with the inter-
I. view²⁷. — The two kings themselves soon after
1162. met at Couci sur Loire, where they received the
 pontiff. They walked on foot by his side, each
 holding a rein of his horse's bridle, and showed
 him to his tent; exhibiting such a spectacle,
 says Baronius, to God, to angels, and to men,
 as hitherto the world had not seen!

And shall it be matter of surprise to the reader,
 who can at all appreciate human nature in her
 most ordinary operations, that the bishops of
 Rome, when kings thus wantonly crouched at
 their feet, or performed the office of menial
 vassals, should have thought themselves their
 superiors? It was by a ceremony far less obse-
 quious, that, in those times, feudal homage was
 made, and subjection manifested. To have
 refused such honors, came not within the reach
 of common nature: and hitherto it has not been
 proved that the popes were more than men. In
 process of time, they demanded, I know, as
 their right, what, at first, was the effect of
 adulation or of a mistaken zeal. Nor can this be
 deemed extraordinary. Their courtiers, besides,
 and their courtly canonists, declared it was their
 due; and they upheld the assertion by the
 authority of long usage, of ancient decrees,

²⁷ Acta ibid. Rob. de Monte an. 1162.

which a sound criticism had not investigated, and of passages from scripture too figuratively explained. But if events or opinions, belonging to a period so distant from our own, can really excite our wonder; the occasion rather should be, not that the popes were pleased with power, and aimed to retain a pre-eminence which they had once acquired; but that kings and civil magistrates, ignorant of their own rights, should have themselves begun and have perpetuated the extravagance. Here common sense alone was a sufficient guide; whereas, in the other case, it is expected that the ordinary passions of men should lose their character, or cease to operate!

Theobald, the archbishop of Canterbury, had been some months dead, and no successor was appointed to the important charge. Engaged in the troubles of the schism, and in other transactions, which detained him in Normandy, Henry was unable to attend minutely to the concerns of government at home. The nomination of a proper person to the primacy of England, was a matter of great moment, as, since the conquest particularly, it had been seen, much the peace of the kingdom, and the happiness of the prince, could be affected by its influence. That there were many candidates for the high dignity, cannot be doubted; but Henry, with great prudence, seems to have weighed the characters

BOOK

I.

1162.

Becket chosen
archbishop of
Canterbury.

BOOK

I.

1162.

of his clergy, and to have judged for himself. It has been related, with what fidelity, the chancellor had served his master, in civil and in military offices. He was with him in the field and cabinet: and as his abilities had excited his admiration, and his personal qualities procured his love, the whole character of the man was open to him. He was a churchman, besides, being in deacon's orders, and the late archbishop, a prelate of great worth, had raised him to the archdeaconry of his see. When a primate was wanted for England, how naturally, therefore, would it occur to Henry that no one could be so proper as his chancellor; and he would flatter himself, that he, whom hitherto he had found so able, and so attached to his interest, would not cease to be so when intrusted with other concerns. The wordly spirit he had till now exhibited, could not be a serious obstacle to his promotion; as the business in which he had been engaged was of a nature to call for a display, sometimes, of martial prowess, and sometimes, of courtly munificence. Also, from the knowledge of his character, which years of intimacy had confirmed, he must have been aware, that the qualities of his mind which had made the statesman and the soldier, were yet ample enough to fill the wide sphere of the first prelacy in his dominions. As the object he had in view was great, and we are told

that he augured much success, from the choice he was making, in the general administration of ecclesiastical and civil concerns²², it is not probable that, at that time, he had formed any design of breaking in upon the established maxims and immunities of the church. Not to have discovered the real cast of Becket's mind, while he could have no motive to disguise it, argues little penetration in Henry; and if he knew it, which he must, how project a scheme for the humiliation of the church, and then appoint a prelate to be her guide, who would oppose that very scheme, and meet him, he was aware, in every attempt!

Henry took his resolution. He was at Falaise in Normandy, and as some affairs were to be transacted in England, he ordered the chancellor to go over. "But," added he privately to him, "you may not know possibly, what is my principal design: I mean you should be archbishop of Canterbury." The chancellor smiled, and pointing to his garment, which was not very canonical, said; "truly, you are going to raise to that great see, and to place at the head of the monks of Canterbury, a very edifying personage, it seems. But should it happen, mark, Sir; the friendship which is now between

²² Hoveden. p. 292. Vita c. 6.

BOOK " us will not continue long. You will expect
 I. " compliances from me, which I shall not be
 1162. " disposed to grant. Already your majesty is
 " making encroachments on the liberties of the
 " church"²⁹.—But when the king was once fixed,
 he did not easily recede; and the cardinal legates,
 who were there, joined their influence to that
 of the monarch. Thomas, urged by a master
 whom he loved, reluctantly consented³⁰; and
 orders were immediately dispatched to the monks
 of Canterbury and the suffragans of the see, to
 proceed to his election. Matilda, it is said,
 disapproved of the measure; and among the
 bishops and clergy, doubtless there were some,
 from various motives, might wish to obstruct his
 promotion³¹. All opposition, however, (if any
 there was,) finally gave way to the positive deter-
 mination of the king.

His election was made, unopposed by any, at
 Westminster, in the presence of the young prince,
 to whom he had lately been appointed preceptor,
 and who, on this occasion, personated his father.
 Under this commission, the royal assent was given,
 and Thomas was then declared to be free from
 every engagement to the court³². Some days

²⁹ Vita c. 6.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Hoved. p. 292.

³² Vita c. 8.

after, his consecration was performed at Canterbury, by the bishop of Winchester, (with the most unanimous concurrence,) at which the prelates of the province and the clergy assisted, with the young prince, and a splendid train of nobles³³. The court, which they paid to the favorite, would be acceptable, they knew, to their royal master. This was in June, 1162, when Becket had been five years chancellor, and was in his forty-fourth year.

BOOK

I.

1162.

He was born in London of reputable parents. His biographers relate that Gilbert, (this was his father's name,) agreeably to the devotion of the age, made a pilgrimage into Palestine, where he was captured by the Saracens, and thrown into prison. Being young and in his manners gentle, he was treated with unusual lenity. The daughter of the chief ruler had thus an opportunity privately to converse with him. He spoke to her of the christian religion, and while she listened, she learned to love. Would he marry her, she one day told him, she would easily contrive to effectuate his escape, and would be the companion of his flight. Gilbert would not risk an attempt, he thought too hazardous. It so happened, however, that, after a year and a half, he did escape with other captives, and left his generous pupil

³³ Gerv. Chron. Rad. Imag. Hist. an. 1162.

BOOK

I.

1162.

behind. She followed him; wandered through many countries, and at last came to England. That he now married her will be easily understood; and of this marriage Thomas was the fruit³⁴. — So relates the fabling Bromton.

His stature was above the common size, and his figure handsome. His understanding was quick and penetrating, his utterance and elocution clear and harmonious, and his manners wonderfully endearing. With facility he solved difficulties, which seemed above his reach; and such was the tenacity of his memory, that he retained whatever he had learned, and could repeat it without the smallest error. The impressions of virtue on his mind were early; his heart was benevolent; and he could feel for the distresses of others, and relieve them. The love of popular applause was long his ruling passion, and it was immoderate³⁵. — He began his studies at Oxford, which at that time, after various fates, was regaining celebrity; and continued them at Paris. Being returned home, his own acquirements, and the interest of friends, recommended him to the notice of the primate, Theobald. With him he lived in confidential intimacy: he employed him in the arduous concerns of office; and more than once

³⁴ Chron. Joan. Bromt. an. 1163.

³⁵ Gervas. Actus Pont. Cant.

he was deputed by him to the court of Rome. **BOOK**
 Bologna was then in high repute, and its canonists **I.**
 and civilians were deemed the first in Europe. **1162.**
 Among these was Gratian, and others of not
 inferior fame, of whom I shall have occasion to
 speak hereafter. It was by their lectures, and the
 publication of their opinions, that the system of
 ecclesiastical domination, which, for some time,
 had prevailed at Rome, now gained stability,
 and spread through the christian churches. Theo-
 bald was desirous that young Becket should pass
 some months in that celebrated academy. He
 was there, and it will shortly appear what were
 the maxims he imbibed. Soon he was promoted
 to the archdeaconry of Canterbury, and acquired
 other lucrative preferments in the church³⁶. I
 have said that, the same patronage of Theobald
 recommended him to Henry; that he was made
 Chancellor, and employed in important negocia-
 tions; and we have just seen that nothing could
 satisfy the unbounded opinion which his master
 entertained of him, but that in his person, to
 the first civil department should be annexed the
 highest dignity in the church. He was chancellor
 of the realm, and primate of all England.

The awful ceremony of consecration had no
 sooner bound him to the church, say his biogra-
 phers, **Change in his
 life and man-
 ners.**

³⁶ Gervas. Pontif. Cant. Vita c. 2.

BOOK I.
1162. phers, than he at once quitted the world, and with it the habits of his former life. He became retired, studious, meditative. But in nothing was he singular or affected. His dress was modest, such as prelates wore; and his charities to the indigent were unbounded. His table was sumptuous, and himself ate what was rare and delicate; but in the train of his attendants there was not, such as had been, a courtly magnificence. Men of learning were his companions: from their intercourse he drew instruction; and he rewarded their labors. The study of antiquity and the scriptures engaged his hours. The monks of Canterbury, instigated by his example, practised more diligently their monastic duties, while the clergy of his diocese saw in their primate all the virtues, which could adorn and elevate their profession³⁷. It was remarked that, even in the court of his prince, where virtue had few votaries, and pleasure invited, he had been uniformly free from vice, and even free from common weaknesses. Henry jeered his innocence, and sometimes aimed to insnare it. His failings were those of a youthful mind, courting popular applause, elated by the smiles of his king, and immeasurably ambitious to extend his glory.

Men, whom nature has not formed in common moulds, whose understandings are large, and

³⁷ Vita c. 9, 10, 11, 12. Gervas, &c.

whose hearts swell, can only be engaged by objects commensurate with their capacities. When Becket was the minister of a monarch, whose empire was extensive, and whose views were vast, the situation harmonized with his character and he could be munificent, and ostentatious, and soldier-like as he. Nor can we wonder, if the looser manners of the age, and the occupations of the busy scene, should have more than reconciled him to employments, which seem not to have become the churchman. There were examples in the French court, and more in that of Frederic. Besides, Theobald had himself raised him to the station, who knew its offices and all its calls. But when the primacy of England was in his hands, with its splendid honors and its thousand duties, the charge alone was amply sufficient; and it could occupy and engross his thoughts. His manners and his views would naturally bend to it; and that cast of character which had fortunately carried him to the objects of his ambition, would now operate to similar exertions in his new department. Now also, he might think, he was become the servant of a greater potentate, than was Henry Plantagenet, namely, of Alexander, the Roman pontiff. It was the prejudice of the age. And may it not be said, that religion and a sense of duty did likewise co-operate to the reformation of manners and the

BOOK change of character, of which I am speaking?

I. New features of mind, and a sternness of virtue

1162. might be then produced, of which before no symptoms had been exhibited. The mind of man is a system of effects. To say then, that the archbishop was insincere in his conversion, and affected new manners, from sinister and insidious views, is ungenerous and contrary to the declarations of the most contemporary writers; but not to be able to see that the transition was most natural, as agreeable to the ordinary phenomena of human nature, speaks a want of discernment of which who is vacant, should not attempt to relate events in which *man* is a principal agent; and to be conscious of truth, and to misstate it, from the prejudications of low bigotry, from dislike of characters, or from a paltry policy, is of prejudice the basest species, and degrades the historian.

The duties of the new charge were so manifold, that the archbishop soon discovered how incompatible they were with the extensive concerns of his first office. He resolved to resign the seals; and he sent them to the king in Normandy, expressing, doubtless, by the messenger, what his motives were. Henry was much affected. The scheme of government he had projected was at once dissolved, and in losing his minister, he felt that his own sinews were relaxed. The step

also was precipitate. The recollection of the many favors he had received, and of his master's unbounded confidence, should have checked, he might naturally think, the hasty resolution, till in person he had laid his difficulties before him. The archbishops of Mentz and Cologne, he knew, were the emperor's prime ministers, the one in Germany, the other in Italy¹⁸. His heart was heavy, and he came to England. Indeed, there was not much, at that moment, to detain him on the continent, and some fresh disturbances in Wales made his presence more necessary. Becket met him at Southampton. They embraced; but he turned his eyes from him, which visibly denoted the coolness of his heart¹⁹. It was marked on another occasion. Thomas had retained the archdeaconry of Canterbury. This office the king urged him to resign; but as he knew it was his intention to confer it on Geoffrey de Riddel, an ecclesiastic whom he disliked, he, from day to day, put off the surrender. The king would not be satisfied, and the archbishop finally complied. The motive of this requisition was evident²⁰.

In the spring of the year 1163, Alexander convened a synod at Tours. Seventeen cardinals, who attended the pontiff, were present, and a

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I.

1162.

1163.

Council of
Tours.¹⁸ Imag. Hist. 1162.¹⁹ Ibid.²⁰ Ibid.

80 HISTORY OF THE REIGN

BOOK numerous prelacy from the kingdoms of France
I. and England. The metropolitan of Canterbury
1163. was received with the most marked attention. Fifteen cardinals, with the bishops who had arrived, went out to meet him. Alexander welcomed him with the sincerest profession of esteem, and when the council opened, he sat with his suffragans on the right hand. On the left was Roger, metropolitan of York, with his suffragan of Durham ⁴¹. Arnold of Lisieux, who has been mentioned, the friend to Alexander and to Henry, whose subject he was, in a studied and eloquent oration harangued the meeting. Who has read it, will not think contemptibly of the oratory of the twelfth century. He spoke of the unity of the church, which schismatics aimed to divide, and of her liberty which tyrants would destroy. "Frederic," says he, "among the princes of the earth, is famed
 "for the virtues of prudence and fortitude.
 "Would to God, he were humbled, and would
 "confess that the power of the church is above
 "his power! By gratitude he should be compelled to own, that Rome is mistress. From her
 "favor alone did his predecessors receive the
 "right of empire ⁴²."—Alexander then himself

⁴¹ Gerv. an. 1163. Vita c. 14.

⁴² Ap. Baron. an. 1163.

related the circumstances of his election; inveighed against the intrusion of Octavian; and once more pronounced anathemas against him and his accomplices. — Ten canons were enacted, which principally regarded such abuses as had made their way into the discipline of the church.

The two kings now signified to the pope, that if it was his intention to continue in their territories, he was free to chuse his residence where it might please him best. He fixed on the city of Sens, in the province of Champagne; to which he retired with his court, and where he resided for two years.

Returned into England from the council of Tours, where the conversation of Alexander and the prelates, had animated his zeal against the oppressors of the church, and the detail of abuses, censured by the synod, had raised a higher veneration for its laws, its rights, and its immunities, the archbishop turned his thoughts to the state of his own diocese. Many abuses had there also crept in, particularly during the civil disturbances of the last reign; and the rights of the see, which were extensive, had been invaded⁴³. We have seen with what activity, Henry, on his accession to the throne, reclaimed such parts of the royal demesne as had been alienated,

B O O K

I.

1163.

Dispute be-
tween Henry
and his bi-
shops.

⁴³ Gerv. Pont. Cant.

BOOK even by the grants of Stephen and Matilda.
I. The rights of the crown, he justly pleaded,
1163. were sacred, and could not be severed from it. And were the possessions and rights of the church then held less sacred? No length of possession, we know, could prescribe against them, and no authority could take them away. On this head, all the ecclesiastical canons, the force of which every kingdom allowed, spoke uniformly the same language. To oppose the infraction of these laws, and to resume such rights as had been invaded or alienated, was not less a constitutional process, than what the monarch had just practised. Thomas, therefore claimed from the king himself the castle of Rochester, and the honors of Hythe and Sandgate, which, he said, belonged peculiarly to the see of Canterbury. He summoned Roger de Clare to do him homage for the castle of Tunbridge, and he sent a similar citation to William de Ros. Many more applications of the like nature were made. The answer in general was, that they held under the king, and owned no other lord. The nobility were thus alarmed, and the king was irritated, while men evil-minded labored to aggravate the impression^{**}. Yet there is little doubt but the claims were just. A breach was thus made

^{**} Gerv. Radulph. Imag. Hist. an. 1163. Vita c. 13.

between Henry and the primate, which the events of every day, as they came charged to the royal ear, only served to widen. When a favorite begins to fall, nothing is more rapid than his descent.

BOOK

I.

1163.

By a law of William the conqueror, made with the concurrence of the nation, ecclesiastical courts had been established, wherein all causes of a spiritual nature were to be decided, according to the canons of the church, or, as they were called, the episcopal laws⁴⁵. The two jurisdictions, civil and ecclesiastical, were thus unwisely separated; and as the decrees of the church, under the influence of Rome, should multiply, so would the code of the new judicature, and the number of *spiritual causes*, be extended. The import of those words was not defined.— Henry I. in his *charter of liberties*, declared the church to be *free*⁴⁶; a word of great latitude: and Stephen confirmed to it, by a solemn grant, “all its liberties, privileges, and ancient customs, together with its lands and possessions.” “All power and jurisdiction over the *persons* and *property* of ecclesiastics,” he commits to the bishops; and promises to observe, and commands to be observed, “the good and ancient laws,

⁴⁵ Hist. of Hen. II. vol. i. p. 43. 527.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 532.

BOOK I. 1163. "and just customs, regarding murders, pleadings, and other matters"⁴⁷.—Henry, at his accession, made no alterations in these grants or statutes; though, in his *charter*, he only mentions the customs, and grants, and liberties, which his grandfather, Henry, had given and bestowed"⁴⁸.—The immunities of the general church were, at this time, very numerous, and among these was the exemption of the persons of ecclesiastics, whatever crimes they had committed, from all civil control. The laws, on which these immunities were supposed to rest, had, by far the greater part, no sanction from antiquity, (notwithstanding the bold assertions of ignorant canonists,) and from reason they could have none"⁴⁹. They were, however, admitted, and in our courts, as well as in those of other countries, universally obtained the force of irrefragable decrees"⁵⁰.

Henry, as became a wise and just governor, who knew that the strength of his empire depended on the virtue of the community and the observance of the laws, was intent on punishing the refractory, and exterminating the incorrigible violators of the public peace. The judges com-

⁴⁷ Hist. of Hen. II. Vol. i. p. 535. ⁴⁸ Vol. iv. p. 169.

⁴⁹ Fleury disc. 4.

⁵⁰ Auct. passim.

plained to him that, it was in vain they attempted to execute his commands, while thefts, rapines, and murders, were with impunity committed by a class of men, to whom their jurisdiction did not reach. A hundred homicides, they said, had been perpetrated by churchmen, since his accession to the throne. The king was stricken, and talked of ordinances, "in which," says my author, "his zeal for public justice was conspicuous, but it exceeded the bounds of prudence." The bishops, he adds, were blameable: for, as the ecclesiastical canons ordained that, not only the more atrocious offenders, but even those guilty of less crimes, should be degraded; how had it happened that, when their numbers were so great, so few had suffered that spiritual punishment? It seems, that they rather screened such delinquents, and defied the arm of justice".—The representation, probably, is overcharged; but that it contained much truth, we know from certain documents.

Philip de Broc, a canon of Bedford, being accused of murder, and taken before a civil judge, publicly insulted the king's minister. The archbishop, informed of the fact, deprived him of his benefice, and sent him into banishment for two years. Other instances there were, at this

" Neubrig. l. 2. c. 16.

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1163. time, of similar canonical censures, where the crimes were most flagitious⁵². — Henry was not satisfied with punishments, which seemed so inadequate to the guilt. He therefore *ordained*, “that such ecclesiastics, as, in future, should be accused of heinous crimes, should be delivered into the hands of the bishop, by whom if found guilty, they were, in the presence of the king’s officers, to be first degraded, and then given up to the secular tribunal to be punished⁵³.” — The bishops opposed the innovation, for such it was, as an infringement of the canons and the privileges of the church: besides they contended that no one should be punished twice for the same crime, and that ecclesiastical censures, which fell immediately on the soul, were of all punishments the most grievous. They did not deny but a churchman, when once degraded from his orders, was liable to be punished, in the secular court, for any crime he might afterwards commit. The primate stood foremost in this opposition to the royal will.

Nothing to us can seem more equitable than this requisition of the king, abstractedly considered. But when we know what then were the immunities and rights of the church, which his predecessors of the Norman line, as we have seen,

⁵² Imag. Hist. an. 1164. Vita cap. 17.

⁵³ Imag. Hist. ibid.

and he himself had solemnly confirmed, could any of them be legally annulled without the consent of the bishops? He applied for this consent: but surely they were free to withhold it; and his application was preceded by an arbitrary decree, which it was his design to enforce. To require that the canons of the church should be severely executed against delinquents, he had authority. He might ask for more; but that implied a power of refusing. Whether they were unwise in their refusal cannot be ascertained, only by our own ideas, which were not those of the times I am describing. The prerogative of the crown, it seems, must be deemed sacred; so must the civil liberties of the people: the ecclesiastical rights of the church alone cannot be supported, but by a spirit of pride and priestly domination!

Irritated by an opposition, for which he should have been prepared, Henry summoned the bishops to meet him at Westminster. They came. He proposed to them his new reform in the laws, assigning for reason that the mild spirit of the canons was not adequate to check the perpetration of crimes. They repeated their opposition; when Becket conjured him not to attempt an innovation in his realm, to which he could not consent. The unanimous opposition provoked him much, and he asked them abruptly; "would

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Conduct of
the primate.

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“ they observe the royal customs?” adding that,
 “ observed as they had been by their predeces-
 “ fors, in the time of his grandfather, they ought
 “ not now to be condemned.” — The prelates
 retired; when returning, the archbishop, as agreed
 amongst them, thus answered for himself and them.
 “ I and my brethren will observe your royal
 “ customs, *saving our order.*” — The king propo-
 sed the question to each bishop, and received
 from each the same answer. Only the bishop of
 Chichester dissented. With indignation he then
 addressed them: “ I see,” said he, “ that you are
 “ drawn up in array against me; there is venom
 “ in the expression, *saving your order*: it is cap-
 “ tious. You must promise to observe the customs
 “ without any restraining clause.” Becket replied:
 “ At our consecration, we swore fealty to your
 “ majesty, namely, of life, limb, and worldly
 “ honor, *saving our order.* In the terms, *worldly*
 “ *honor*, were the royal customs included. We
 “ can promise to observe them in no other form.”
 — It was late in the evening, and the king had
 been much harassed, when, in great fury, he
 precipitately retired from the hall, without salu-
 ting the bishops “.

The reader will have observed, how, on a
 sudden, the first object in discussion being dropt,

“ Vita c. 18, 19. Gerv. an. 1163.

a new question was brought forward. The king had proposed to the prelates, that they should admit his new statute about the trial of ecclesiastics. They refuse; when instantly he turns to the *royal customs*. He could not mean to insinuate that there was any connexion between them, (for he knew that the first proposal went to the abrogation of an old law, which his predecessors had confirmed,) and that the customs, which he now alledged, were, as he asserted, the ancient usages of the realm. — Elsewhere I shall have occasion more than once to remark, that the king, in this perplexed controversy, seems to have acted from no premeditated plan; but to have shifted his ground, as the wayward passion led, and to have brought forward matter of fresh discussion, to ease resentment, or for the unprincely purpose of retaliation.

The next morning he took from the primate the castles of Eye and Berkham, which had been given into his custody when chancellor; and, without acquainting the bishops, left London before day-break^{ss}. — It was in the month of October.

The report of the quarrel between Henry and his prelates excited general attention, and as interest, or better motives preponderated, so men judged. Alexander would naturally applaud the

^{ss} Radulph. an. 1164.

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1163. firmness of the bishops; but as his obligations to the king were manifold, and he still wanted all his aid, his situation became peculiarly delicate. — The bishop of Lisieux, about this time, came to England. He found the nation divided into parties, the king violently agitated, and many of the episcopal order in great consternation. The primate only bore his head aloft, and braved the storm. The wily Norman, who well saw he must espouse some party, was perplexed. To incur the anger of his master he was not disposed; and he was aware how warm upon the recollection of the bishops must be the harangue, on the liberties of the church, which he had pronounced at Tours. Strenuously did he labor to restore peace; but in vain. He then advised the king, if possible, to divide the bishops, that so their power might be weakened. The advice was neither generous nor honorable; but it succeeded. Roger of York was persuaded to desert the confederacy, and he was soon followed by others, who now enforced the propriety of the king's demand, and vehemently solicited the primate to resist no longer. The king, they said, had all power in his hands, and was inflexibly determined; and would he, for the sake of a single expression, expose himself and the church to dangers, which his submission only could avert⁵⁶?

⁵⁶ Hoveden. p. 282. Gerv. an. 1163. Vita c. 20.

Other means were also employed, promises, careffes, entreaties. Noblemen of the first distinction, in the monarch's name, waited on him. They pressed him by every argument, such as the bishops had used, and they added others. They mentioned his obligations to the king; the evils which had already followed their disunion; and they talked of the folly of hazarding all for a trifle. It seemed as if England and all the foreign provinces were at stake! — Messengers from Alexander and the cardinals came to him, empowered, as they said, to command his compliance. One of them, an abbot, took upon himself to declare that the king had sworn, that he meant not to touch the immunities of the church, but only to be honored before his nobles. They added, that he would therefore be satisfied even with the shadow of a promise, provided the point of honor were secured to him⁵⁷.

Such were the means used to bend the primate to the monarch's will. A prince, well-advised, would not thus have wantonly engaged in a personal altercation with his subject, knowing it was the means to sink his own dignity, and to exalt the primate. It poured into his mind a sense of consequence, which otherwise he might not have felt, and it added finews to his firmness. By consti-

⁵⁷ Hoveden. p. 282. Gerv. an. 1163. Vita c. 20.

BOOK I.
1163. tutional means only, in a general convocation of the estates, a wise king would have attempted this favorite reform, and failing there, he would have respected the rights, which a large body of his people had been taught to cherish.

The archbishop thus, on all sides, pressed by men, whose opinions it would have been pride to undervalue, and by the entreaties of those, whom he knew to be his friends, at last gave way. He had done enough to satisfy his own conscience, it seemed, and respect was due to others. He waited on the king, and told him he would *observe his royal customs*. Henry's countenance cleared up; but it did not assume that simple and dove-like gentleness, which, we are told, it could sometimes wear⁵⁸. "I am satisfied," said he; "this only I must further require, that the declaration you have made, be repeated in a public assembly of my bishops and the nobles of my realm." They parted⁵⁹.

Henry was at his favorite palace of Woodstock, where the charming Rosamond de Clifford strove to sooth his angry cares; and where the homage of Malcolm king of Scotland, and of the Welsh princes and chief lords, paid to himself and son⁶⁰, made some compensation for the untoward conduct of his English bishops.

⁵⁸ Pet. Bles. ep. 66. ⁵⁹ Hoveden. &c. ut supra.

⁶⁰ Diceto. *ibid.*

In this year, Gilbert Foliot, bishop of Hereford, a man versed in sacred literature and of approved merit, and whom the primate on that account, warmly recommended to the king, was translated to the see of London. The pope also, at Henry's desire, proposed him to the chapter, by which he was unanimously elected. He was the king's confessor, who wished to have him near his person. London was, at that time, called a royal city, it being the principal residence of our monarchs, and there the great national meetings were chiefly held. A man of Foliot's learning, for he is said likewise to have been skilled in the civil and canonical law, was judged most proper to rule that important see. The king seems to have urged his promotion with a partial earnestness; but what is extraordinary, as the series of events will show, even Becket himself is said to have taken a very active part in his favor⁶¹.

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I.
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Three months elapsed, before the bishops with their primate were again summoned to appear. It is not related, why the king was so dilatory in bringing a question to issue in which he seemed to be much interested; which was to fix a bar, modern writers tell us, against clerical encroachments; and when the haughty Becket, with his

1164.

⁶¹ De Diceto, Gervas, an. 1163.

BOOK adherents, would be humbled at his feet. As the
I. business was important, we may fairly presume,
1164. that leisure was required to digest its several parts. The wise heads of the nation must be consulted, that each royal and ancient custom be exactly defined, and be ready to be produced, with such evidence of authenticity, that cavil and opposition shall at once be silenced. In the confusion, which the troubles of the civil war had introduced, and more than that, in the collision of Saxon and Norman laws and usages, it must be no easy task to ascertain, with precision, even the limits of the civil power, much less to determine the exact boundaries of the two rival jurisdictions. The day at last was fixed, and a general council of the nation was summoned to Clarendon, a royal palace near Salisbury, for the 28th of January, 1164.

Meeting of
Clarendon.

They met, all the prelates, abbots, priors, earls, barons and great men of the land. John of Oxford, one of the king's chaplains, presided; and Henry took his seat. — Abruptly then, it seems, he called on the bishops to perform their promise, and with threats urged them to submit. The primate who, from the beginning, had suspected the king's intentions, was alarmed by this intemperate exordium, and expressed a design (*proposuit*) of receding from the imprudent engagement, he had, in a manner, been com-

pelled to make. At this, Henry's rage was
 extreme: in the eyes of the council it bore the
 appearance of phrensy. He menaced banishment
 and death. Those bishops who, as yet, had not
 deserted the primate, were stricken as by a
 thunder-bolt. They crowd round him, and with
 tears entreat that he will relent, as his person,
 the safety of the clergy, and their own lives were
 at stake. Robert earl of Leicester, and Reginald
 earl of Cornwall, men famed for wisdom, and
 powerful in the state, advance up to him: "If
 " you refuse to submit to the royal will," said they,
 " he commands us to use force; though the event,
 " we know, will bring infamy on him and us."
 Thomas was not moved. Two knights templars,
 Richard de Hastings, and Tostes of St. Omer,
 whom the king greatly loved, and whose general
 talents were admired, are ordered to try their
 influence. In a supplicating attitude they ap-
 proach, and fall on their knees. They sigh, and
 weep, and conjure, that he will have some
 solicitude for himself, and show pity to his clergy.
 The strong remonstrance, thus pathetically ex-
 pressed, had its effect. It seemed to intimate that
 the drawn dagger was even now pointed at his
 heart. Indeed, some of the king's guards were
 seen running through the chambers with naked
 swords, their garments tucked up, and ready
 for execution.—Struggling with his own resolution,

BOOK

I.

1164.

BOOK I.
1164. yet affected for the sake of others, the primate now signified, that he would obey the king's will; and then promised that, "on the word of truth, he would observe the ancient customs of the realm." The bishops made the same solemn promise. Forthwith it was proposed, that the customs be recited, and be reduced into order. But now it appeared, "that as yet it was not known, which they were." The urgency of the demand only had excited suspicion. Such of the assembly, therefore, as, from age and experience, might be thought to know them best, were ordered, from memory, to collect them. They had formed a list, and were proceeding to others, when the archbishop observed: "I am not among the elders of the realm, so as to know what these customs are, nor have I been long in my present office. The matter is weighty, and the day is fast declining; let the further prosecution of the business be made over to the morning." The motion was accepted, and the council rose⁶².

Such, as contemporary historians have recorded, whom I have faithfully copied, were the first day's transactions at Clarendon. On their violence and general tendency, the reader will make his own reflections. I only wish to suggest that, as to

⁶² Gerv. an. 1164. Vita c. 21. Neubrig. Hoveden.

Becket;

Becket ; when he proposed to recoil from his imprudent engagement, at the imperious mandate of the king, it was what every honest man should have done. He saw there was no honor in his views. Again, indeed, he gave way, and I will call it a weakness; but what, in like circumstances, would have been the conduct of the most resolved patriot? Promises so extorted are not binding, if, on a cool revision, they displease. I do not say, it was fear absolutely which prevailed on the archbishop; but it was a mode of entreaty, as irresistible as it. — As to the members of the meeting, the primate alone excepted, there was not a spark of liberty in their breasts. — As to Henry; he came to Clarendon like a tyrant from the east. It was not to strengthen the arm of justice, to invigorate the laws, to protect the rights of the crown, that he would enforce his royal customs, or he would have come prepared to exhibit them; but to gratify revenge, and to triumph in the humiliation of a man, who had dared to oppose him. It appeared also in his intemperate rage. Henry, I own, in many regards, was a great prince, great in peace and war, and I shall have occasion to show it; but his greatness never once appears in this controversy with Becket. — As to the bishops; by fear, by interest, or by adulation,

BOOK I. 1164. they were all unmanned, and shamefully deserted their colors. Before they came to Clarendon, this had happened. Old Henry of Winchester, I believe, stood firm, and perhaps another. This is truth, or all history is a fable. Yet, surely, the turn which the question took at Clarendon, should have opened their eyes, or it should have made them, if they valued their characters, as wary, and as reluctant, as their primate.

The congress assembled the next morning, and the ancients resumed their inquiry. As the king, from his youth, could know nothing of the customs, he implicitly relied on them; and it is thought, they, in many instances, rather, aimed to widen the breach, than to conciliate by the production of uncontrovertible facts. The committee withdrew to a separate apartment, and, after some time, returned with the following list of customs". They are now styled the *Constitutions of Clarendon*, though the authors nearest to the times, are unanimous in branding them with the most opprobrious epithets.

Its constitu-
tions. 1. "All suits, concerning the advowson and presentation of churches, to be tried and determined in the king's court."
2. "Churches, belonging to the king's fee, not to be granted in perpetuity without his consent."

" Ut supra.

3. " Clerks arraigned and accused of any matter, B O O K
" being summoned by the king's justiciary, shall I.
" come into his court, to answer there, concer- 1164.
" ning that which it shall appear to the king's
" court is cognizable there; and shall answer in
" the ecclesiastical court, concerning that which it
" shall appear is cognizable there: so that the king's
" justiciary shall send to the court of holy church,
" to see in what manner the cause shall be tried
" there. And if a clerk shall be convicted, or
" confess his crime, the church must not any
" longer protect him."

4. " No archbishops, bishops, or dignified
" clergymen of the realm, to go out of the
" kingdom, without the king's licence."

5. " Persons excommunicated not to make any
" deposit for appearance, or to take any oath,
" but only to find security to stand to the judgment
" of the church, in order to absolution."

6. " Laics not to be accused in spiritual courts,
" except by reputable and legal promoters and
" witnesses."

7. " No tenant in chief of the king, nor any
" officer of his household, to be excommunicated,
" nor the lands of any of them to be put under
" an interdict, unless the king or his justiciary
" shall have been first apprized."

8. " All appeals to proceed from the arch-
" deacon to the bishop, and from the bishop to

BOOK " the archbishop. If the latter fail in doing
 I. " justice, the cause to go to the king, that by his
 1164. " precept it may be determined in the archbishop's
 " court, so that it may proceed no further without
 " the king's consent. "

9. " Should any dispute arise between a lay-
 " man and a clergyman, concerning a tenement,
 " and it be litigated whether it be a lay or an
 " ecclesiastical fee, it shall first be decided by
 " the verdict of twelve lawful men, before the
 " king's chief justice, to what class it belongs;
 " and if it be found to be a lay fee, the suit
 " shall be pleaded in the civil court, otherwise
 " in the ecclesiastical. "

10. " If any one in the demesne of the king
 " be cited by the archdeacon or bishop on
 " account of an offence, for which he should
 " answer to them, and refuse to appear, he may
 " be put under an interdict: but he must not be
 " excommunicated, before the king's officer of
 " the place be applied to, that he may compel
 " him judicially to make satisfaction. If the
 " officer fail therein, the bishop may punish the
 " accused by ecclesiastical censures. "

11. " Archbishops, bishops, and such clergy,
 " as are tenants in chief of the king, hold their
 " possessions from him, as barons of the realm,
 " and are subject to the same duties: they must
 " attend with the barons in the king's courts,

“ and assist at trials, till judgment proceed to
 “ the loss of members or death.”

B O O K

I.

12. “ When an archbishopric, or bishopric,
 “ or abbey, or priory, of the king’s demesne,
 “ falls vacant, it shall be in the hands of the
 “ king, to receive all the rents and issues thereof.
 “ And when the place is to be supplied, he
 “ shall send for the principal clergy, and the
 “ election shall be made in the king’s chapel,
 “ with his assent, and the advice of those whom
 “ he called for that purpose. And the person
 “ elected shall there do homage and fealty to
 “ him, as his liege lord, of life, limb, and
 “ worldly honor, (saving his order,) before he
 “ be consecrated.”

1164.

13. “ If any nobleman of the realm shall
 “ refuse to submit to the spiritual courts, the
 “ king shall oblige him to submission: and if any
 “ refuse obedience to the king, the church shall
 “ use her power to reduce them.”

14. “ Chattels forfeited to the king may not
 “ be protected in churches or church-yards,
 “ because they are the king’s wherever they
 “ be found.”

15. “ Pleas of debt, whether owing by faith
 “ solemnly pledged, or otherwise, pertain to
 “ the king’s judicature.”

16. “ The sons of villeins (husbandmen) not

BOOK "to be ordained clerks, without the consent of
I. "the lord, on whose land they were born."

1164. The preamble states that, in the presence of the king, was made this *remembrance* or *recognition* of some part of the customs, and liberties, and honors of his predecessors, that is, of Henry his grandfather, and of others, which shall be observed and held in the realm. And, on account of the dissensions and discords, which had happened between the clergy and the king's officers, and the barons of the land, about its customs and honors, this recognition, it adds, was made before the archbishops, and bishops, and clergy, and earls, and barons, and nobles. The customs being thus solemnly acknowledged, the prelates, it says, on the word of truth, promised to observe them. Then come their names: the two archbishops, Gilbert of London, Henry of Winchester, Nigel of Ely, William of Norwich, Robert of Lincoln, Hilary of Chichester, Jocelin of Salisbury, Richard of Chester, (Lichfield,) Bartholomew of Exeter, Robert of Hereford, David of St. David's, and Roger elect of Worcester. Then follow the names of thirty seven nobles, English and Norman, with a general mention of the rest.

The statute closes thus: "But there are many
"more and great customs and honors of our
"holy mother the church, and of our lord the

“ king, and of the barons of the realm, which
 “ are not contained in this writing. They shall
 “ remain untouched to the church, and to the
 “ king and his heirs, and to the barons, and
 “ shall be observed for ever inviolably “.

BOOK

I.

1164.

The ordinances (such as I have stated) being produced to the assembly, and read; the king, addressing himself to the prelates, requested, for greater security and to give them stability, that they affix their seals to the deed. The bishops assented; but the primate expressed his astonishment, and showed a reluctance to comply. He had not expected, having gone so far to satisfy the king, that a fresh demand would be made. “ The matter, ” he again observed, “ was delicate, and he wished for time to “ deliberate. ” On this, a copy of the ordinances was delivered into his hand; the archbishop of York received another; and a third was retained, to be deposited among the archives of the realm “. The council of Clarendon was then dissolved.

Becket, with a heavy heart, retired with the few bishops who had remained steady to him, and his attendant clergy, and took the road to Winchester. It was a moment for serious thought.

Becket re-
pents of his
weakness.

“ Vita p. 163. ep. 12. Gerv. Hist. of Hen. II.
vol. iv. p. 182.

“ Hoveden. Gerv. Vita c. 22.

BOOK I. 1164. With pleasure he felt himself released, from the tumult and oppressive scenes he had been obliged to witness; still he had a weighty charge, it seemed, to bring against himself. Contrary to the conviction of his mind, he had given way to entreaties, and involved himself, in difficulties, from which there was no return. Knowing, as he did, what were the king's intentions, or rather, perhaps, what were the intentions of his enemies, how imprudent was it to promise compliance, and that, before any specification was made of the *customs*, to which it was demanded he should assent? Primate as he was of a great church, no supplication of friends, or menaces of those in power, should have extorted the incautious promise. The customs, it was now clear, as read in the ears of the assembly, announced their own condemnation. They were, many of them, contrary to the known charters of the land, given by the Norman kings to the church, and contrary to the received maxims of the general canons. To them he had not fixed his seal; but that was a weak consolation: he had solemnly pledged his word to observe the customs, and his name, inserted in the statute, would go down to the latest ages. His reverie was interrupted by the conversation of those who journeyed with him, most of whom severely censured his weak condescension. And

may we not be allowed to think, that his sorrow was unfeigned, for having sacrificed, what *he* could not but esteem, the ancient liberties of his clergy? He was sorry; he attested it in a public manner; and he purposed to dispatch a messenger to Alexander⁶⁶.

BOOK

I.

1164.

But Henry, before the meeting of Clarendon, it seems, had employed the bishop of Lisieux and the archdeacon of Poitiers, to solicit from his holiness the legation of England for the archbishop of York, and a mandate to Becket and the bishops, requiring their submission to the customs of the realm. Alexander, though he had reason to apprehend, from the lowering aspect, that the storm would soon reach himself, at that time, evaded the petition. It was now more earnestly repeated. Geoffry Ridel and John of Oxford, the king's chaplains, went over to Sens, and having requested the legatine powers for Roger of York, they entreated that his holiness would confirm the customs, which had been recorded at Clarendon, to Henry and his successors, by the authority of the apostolic see. This part of the petition he peremptorily refused; and though he granted the other, from prudential motives, it was with such restrictions, as to render it of no avail. He might have the legation,

The king applies to Alexander.

⁶⁶ Vita ut supra.

BOOK he said, but not to be exercised against the person of Becket, or in the diocese of Canterbury¹.

I.
1164. The king, with indignation, returned the illusory brief. This was in the beginning of March.

While Henry thus strenuously labored to strengthen his late measures, by the sanction of the court of Sens, and to procure for the rival of Canterbury the powers, which properly belonged to that see, he had not forgotten, that the primate had not set his seal to the constitutions of Clarendon; and it was reported that, not only he would never do it, but that he was resolved to oppose their execution. The incompliant temper of Alexander, which by presents he had striven to sooth, did not a little add to his ill humor. He resolved to harass the archbishop; and if he could not conquer, he would torment, him².—Becket had received letters from the pope, which were meant to quiet the scruples his ductility at Clarendon had excited; and while they praised his sollicitude for the rights of the church, they exhorted him to give way, as much as might be, and not, by an imprudent resistance, to aggravate the evils which threatened³.

¹ l. 1. ep. 4, 5, 6, 7.

² Vita c. 23. Gerv. ut sup. ³ ep. 4. 26.

Such was the state of things, during the spring and a part of summer. The king's officers, with an insulting severity, executed the new statutes, and the king himself was unsatisfied and morose. To recover the favor of Henry, which Alexander had urged him to attempt, seemed impossible, and daily to witness scenes, which gave him pain, could but add to his misery. Perhaps, were his person out of sight, measures less intemperate might be pursued. Becket reasoned thus, and resolved to withdraw from the kingdom⁷⁰. The step was contrary to the fourth statute of Clarendon.

BOOK

I.

1164.

He communicated his design to two confidential servants, and repairing to a neighbouring convent, he secretly escaped to Romney, where a boat waited, and sailed for France. But the captain, fearful of the king's displeasure, should he convey the archbishop out of the realm, pretended the wind was contrary, and after some hours relanded him on the coast. On the evening of the same day, he returned towards Canterbury. — The news of his departure much alarmed his friends, and they dispersed. But one of them, bolder than the rest, came to the palace. He was anxious about his master's fate, and after supper retired, thoughtful, to the primate's

Becket at
temps to leave
the kingdom.

⁷⁰ Gerv. *ibid.* Vita c. 23.

BOOK I.
1164. apartment. The first part of the night passed, and he had not closed his eyes: "Go," said he to his servant, "shut the outer gate, that we may not be disturbed." The boy went with a light, and looking round him, discovered the archbishop sitting near the door alone. His master and some of the monks came to him. Becket related his adventure, and going in, took some refreshment, and retired to rest. — In the morning, the king's officers were announced, who, on the report of the primate's flight, had been sent with a commission to seize his temporalities. The primate, at that moment, passed by them, going to morning service. His presence put a stop to their proceedings; and the king, we are told, heard of his return with pleasure, from an apprehension, that his flight abroad would be ascribed to persecution at home, and that the censures of the church might fall on his kingdom⁷¹.

They met, some time after, at Woodstock, and their meeting was not unfriendly. But Henry feared he might, on a fresh provocation, again attempt to leave the country, and be more successful. With the advice of his courtiers, therefore, and from motives not greatly honorable, he determined once more to cite him before a council

⁷¹ Gerv. Vita ibid.

of the nation, there to accuse him of misdemeanors, and to urge charges, from which, he trusted, neither his address nor firmness should be competent to free him. Utter humiliation, perhaps the resignation of his see, would, he flattered himself, be the consequence. With this view, he convoked an assembly of the states at Northampton, for the eleventh of October ⁷².

Events, not uninteresting, on the continent must, for a moment, relieve this series of domestic occurrences.—Victor, in the month of April, died at Lucca. He was preparing, it is said, to return to Rome, and hoped that he should enter it triumphant. His prospects vanished, and the priests of Lucca refused to bury him within their walls. The chair of St. Peter had not been to Victor, at least, a seat of riches, for he died indigent, leaving all he could call his own, an oratory and a pair of horses, to his protector Frederic.—There remained but two cardinals of the faction, Guido of Crema and John of St. Martin. These assembled what prelates and clergy they could collect, who gave their votes to Guido. He took the name of Pascal III. The emperor confirmed the election, and solemnly swore on the gospels, that he would never receive any other pope than Pascal and his successors ⁷³.

B O O K

I.

1164.

Death of Vic-
tor, and the
affairs of
Lombardy.

⁷² Gervas. Ibid.

⁷³ Chron. Leuden. Acta Alex. an. 1164.

BOOK

I.

1164.

The conqueror of Milan was still in Lombardy. Deprived of their ancient rights, and insultingly oppressed, as I have said, by the exactions of their enemies, the brave Lombards, even while Frederic was among them, dared to think of liberty. The cities of Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and some others formed a secret league, and the republic of Venice, whose privileges the imperial officers had not respected, joined the confederacy. Thus emboldened, they began to speak more freely, and to resist. The emperor heard of their designs, and with the few German forces he had with him, and the auxiliaries of Pavia and Cremona, directed his march towards Verona. Its neighbouring castles fell an easy prey. But as he advanced, devoting the rebellious cities to destruction, the allies poured from all quarters into the plain, and pitched their tents before him. To retire was disgraceful, and to engage an enemy, thus resolute and superior in numbers, was not to be hazarded. He chose the former, taking this lesson with him, that men who have been free, will not long submit to oppression: they may be awed for a time, but they are not conquered. He was likewise made sensible that his Italian allies, whom hatred to Milan no longer actuated, could not be relied on. They showed no ardor in his cause. He retired therefore to Pavia, in sullen indignation,

leaving behind him in all the towns and castles, German governors and German garrisons. On the nobility, indeed, he could place some reliance, because themselves stood in need of his protection, against the democratic attempts of their countrymen. The Lombards, who had now seen the back of Frederic, from the success of the Veronese confederacy, began to meditate greater attempts: he therefore withdrew into Germany, purposing, in due time, to revenge the galling insult⁷⁴.

BOOK
I.
1164.

Agreeably to the royal summons, on the eleventh of October, the assembly of the nation met at Northampton. It was as crowded as that of Clarendon, and the nobles and prelates being seated, Henry addressed the primate. "I charge you," said he, "with not having done justice, in your court of Canterbury, to John, the marshal of my exchequer, when he there sued you for an estate that had belonged to his ancestors; and with not appearing in my court, when you were cited, on the appeal of my servant, to answer before me."—The marshal, it seems, on not finding the justice he expected, appealed, as the law directed, from the ecclesiastical court, and complained to the king.—"Your marshal," replied the primate,

Meeting at
Northampton.

⁷⁴ Murat. an. 1164.

BOOK " was denied no justice in my court, as those

I. " who tried his claim can witness; but he ap-

1164. " pealed, and his appeal was informal; for in-

" stead of swearing on the gospels, to authorize

" his appeal, as the law of the realm requires,

" either advised to it, or by his own impulse,

" he produced a psalter or a song-book, and on

" that he swore.—That I did not come to your

" majesty's court, when cited to appear there,

" was not out of contempt; but a severe illness,

" against my will, detained me. Two of my

" knights, however, waited on the court with

" my apology".

Such was Becket's defence, as historians state

it; but from the sentence, which the court pro-

nounced, circumstances must have been omitted,

which to their judgment gave it less validity,

unless we may suppose, that the behaviour of

Henry suspended the course of justice. Regardless

of every plea, with an intemperate fury, he

swore that judgment should be passed, and

justice done him". The primate's defence, at

least, was deemed insufficient, and the court

condemned him as guilty of contumacy, for hav-

ing disobeyed his liege lord, to whom he had

sworn fealty and the observance of his earthly

honor,

" Hoveden. Gerv. an. 1164.

" Hoveden. ib.

honor, and they decreed all his goods and chattels to be at the mercy of the king. The bishops unanimously concurred in the sentence with the temporal barons. Becket submitted to the verdict; and as a fine of five hundred pounds (equal to more than seven thousand pounds of our money) would be accepted by Henry, he promised to pay the sum, and found sureties⁷⁷. — Thus ended the first day.

On the morrow, the king demanded from the archbishop the sum of three hundred pounds, which, while they were in his possession, he had levied upon the castles of Eye and Berkhamstead. — “More than that sum,” answered he, “I expended on those castles, and on the royal castle at London, as the repairs themselves do show. But money shall be no ground of quarrel between me and my sovereign: I will pay the sum;” and immediately he gave sureties for it⁷⁸. — “While you were chancellor,” continued Henry, “during the war of Toulouse, I lent you five hundred pounds, which I now demand from you.” — “The five hundred pounds were given, not lent,” replied the primate. However, as it rested on his single assertion, the court compelled him to refund

⁷⁷ Hoveden. Gerv.

⁷⁸ Vita c. 26.

BOOK the money, and to find sureties, which he did".

I. This was the business of the second day.

1164. The third day produced a heavier charge. During his administration, as chancellor, the rents of many vacant abbies and bishoprics, with other revenues belonging to the crown, had been in his hands. "Of these," said the king, "I now demand an account. The balance due from those revenues shall be paid." — "When I was appointed to the see of Canterbury," replied the primate, "before my consecration, by the prince, your royal son, and my lord of Leicester, your justiciary, I was pronounced free and discharged from every bond of the court; and as such the church received me. To this charge then I am not bound to plead. Besides, it comes upon me unexpectedly, and I am not prepared to answer it. I ask for leisure to consult with those who can advise me. After that I will answer". The request was complied with, and he withdrew with the bishops into a separate chamber.

With surprise the reader will have observed, that no mention has here been made of the *customs of Clarendon*. The matter is all new, and

" Vita ib. Gerv. ut supra. Rad. Dicet. an. 1164.

" Rad. Dicet. Gerv. ibid.

unconnected with them. But already I have remarked, that the caprice of passion, and not consistency, directed the series of this ungenerous prosecution. The prelate is not accused of any violation of his promise made at Clarendon, or of having opposed the execution of its statutes. As the temper of the king and his council was, we are therefore authorized to conclude that he had been guilty of neither. Such a charge, could it have been produced, would have come home with more efficacy, than such as we have witnessed. — As to the charges themselves, the first excepted, which carried some air of justice with it, they were vexatious, and unworthy of a king to urge. Whilst the tide of royal favor flowed, wealth and honors, with an unsparing hand, were heaped on the favorite; and the wealth; as we have seen, he expended, and the honors he employed, to promote his master's interest and glory. Thus, in truth, was an adequate return made, and there was no room to ask for more. When the king advanced his chancellor to the see of Canterbury, he was satisfied with what he had done in his former high office, in which he meant still to retain him, nor was it his intention, to demand an account of the sums he had spent; for two years passed, and no demand was made. But they quarrel, and this great king recurs to the claims, I have

BOOK

I.

1164.

BOOK related, and he makes them, unblushingly, as I
 I. have told it, in the eye of the nation! The
 1164. prelate alone, thus assailed by a vindictive monarch, insulted by his peers, and deserted by his brethren, yet boldly standing on his defence, and submitting to each sentence as pronounced against him, calls for our veneration. In better days, or rather, in another cause, to such heroic firmness the tongues of an admiring people had echoed praise, and to us it had been perpetuated on the rolling stream of time.

Being retired to an inner room, the doors of which by the king's order were locked, Becket, after a short pause, requested the opinions of his suffragans. — The bishop of London spoke first. “Father,” said he, “did you recollect from what the king, our master, raised you, the favors he bestowed upon you, and the danger which threatens the church and us, should you resist his will, not only would you resign the see of Canterbury, but ten times more, were it necessary. Perhaps, seeing this your humility, he might be moved to reinstate you in all your possessions.” — “I perceive,” observed Becket, “that your advice is not unpremeditated.”

Henry of Winchester spoke. — “The opinion, which has been given, is of a pernicious tendency to the church, and involves us all;

“ for, should our primate set us this example, BOOK
 “ that, at the will or menace of the prince, a I.
 “ bishop must relinquish his charge, what in 1164.
 “ future shall be expected, but a violation of our
 “ rights, and, as he may direct, the subversion
 “ of all order? The confusion of the priesthood
 “ will reach the people.”

“ Unless the urgency of the times and the
 “ perturbation of the church called for other
 “ measures, I should vote with my lord of
 “ Winchester,” replied Hilary of Chichester, a
 man vain in words. “ But when of the canons
 “ the authority itself staggers, from the severity
 “ of discipline much must be relaxed, that
 “ moderation may effect, what rigid discipline
 “ would overthrow. It is my opinion therefore,
 “ that we give way to the royal will, but only
 “ for a time. Inconsiderately we may adopt
 “ resolutions, from which to recede it may hereaf-
 “ ter be more mortifying, and more galling to
 “ our pride.”

“ I see very plainly,” observed Robert of
 Lincoln, “ that they seek the life and blood of
 “ this man. One of the two is therefore neces-
 “ sary, either to quit his archbishopric or his
 “ life. Now of what use his archbishopric will
 “ be to him after he has lost his life, for my
 “ part, I profess, I cannot see.” — This Robert,

BOOK I. says the historian, was but a simple and injudicious man.

1164. Bartholomew of Exeter, then delivered his opinion. — “ That the times are evil, will, I
“ think, be denied by no one. And if by any
“ subterfuge, we can escape the present storm,
“ unhurt, that surely should be aimed at: but
“ even in this, little success can be expected,
“ unless we give way considerably. The pressure
“ of the moment requires it, particularly as this
“ prosecution is personal, and does not involve
“ us all. It is better then that the head of one
“ man be exposed to danger, than that the
“ English church suffer inevitably.”

Roger, lately consecrated to the see of Worcester, spoke thus ambiguously.—“ I wish,” said he,
“ to give no opinion; because should I say that
“ the cure of souls ought to be resigned, when
“ the prince so wills it or threatens, I should
“ speak against my own conscience, and my
“ mouth would belie my heart. If I say, that the
“ king should be opposed; here are those present
“ who are devoted to him, who will make their
“ report. I shall be ranked, in future, with his
“ enemies, and be condemned. Therefore I
“ wave all decision, and give no advice.”

A pause ensued; and as they could not quit the room, the archbishop signified, that he

^a Vita c. 27. Gerv. ut sup.

wished to speak with the earls of Leicester and Cornwall. They came in haste, and opening the doors, entered to the bishops. "My lords," said the prelate, "we have debated on the charge which the king has brought against me; but as the persons, to whom my cause is best known, are not with me, I ask for a respite till the morrow, when I will answer, as God shall direct me." The king assented to his request, and the council rose.

BOOK

I.

1164.

By the turn, which the debate took, in the private deliberation of the prelates, they seem to have understood that the king's intention, when he brought the last charge against the archbishop, was to force him to a resignation of his see. Indeed, so intricate and extensive must have been the accounts he demanded, and so uncertain the claim, that the reimbursement of any sum might have been required. The revenues of the see of Canterbury were not equal to the discharge, and no sureties could have been found. The king talked of forty-four thousand marks, which, from the comparative value of money, was an enormous sum: nothing then, it was thought, remained, but that the primate should resign his see, and throw himself on the royal mercy. He himself saw the intricacy of his situation, and viewing the iniquity of the prosecution, he seems, from this moment, to have determined

BOOK I.
1164. to avail himself of the sacredness of his character for protection, (as justly he might,) and to involve his cause with that of God and religion. The notions of the age conspired with his views, and his enemies, though they drew ruin on his head, had themselves reason to repent their wanton and malevolent attack.

The next day was Sunday. Perceiving that the multitude of knights and others, who till now had attended on his person, came not near him, apprehensive of the fate which threatened, the primate ordered the poor of the neighbourhood to be collected, and to be seated at his table. "By these," said he, "I shall obtain an easier victory, than by those who have shamefully deserted me in the hour of danger." The favor of the people was thus excited, and religion seemed to sanctify his cause. — He had been long subject to a pain in his bowels, and now care and vexation conspiring, it attacked him with violence, and he retired to rest. The morning came, and he was unable to rise⁸².

On Monday, the council assembled, and having some time waited for the archbishop, the two earls, above-mentioned, were ordered to go to his lodgings, and cite him to appear. It was reported that he counterfeited sickness. "You are

⁸² Vita c. 28. Gerv.

“ sensible, ” said he to the earls, “ what it is that
 “ detains me. Give me but a respite till to-mor-
 “ row’s sun , and I will come to your court,
 “ though I be conveyed in a litter.” It was
 granted. In the course of the day, however,
 intimation was secretly given to him by those
 who approached the king, that, if he appeared in
 court, his destruction or imprisonment was
 resolved on⁸³.

Early in the morning he was visited by many
 of the bishops, who endeavoured to persuade
 him, that, for the peace of the church, and his
 own safety, he would submit himself, without
 reserve, to the king’s pleasure. He rejected their
 advice, with a severe reprimand on their own
 conduct. “ It is, ” he added, “ a detestable
 “ proceeding, that you have not only forsaken
 “ me in this dispute, but now, for two days,
 “ have sat in judgment, with the barons, on me
 “ your father, you who should have stood by me.
 “ I forbid you to attend any further proceedings
 “ against me. And if, as it is rumored, violence
 “ should be offered to me, I command you, in
 “ holy obedience, by the censures of the church
 “ to avenge the injury⁸⁴.” The bishops retired;
 and the primate going to the church, at an altar
 dedicated to St. Stephen, celebrated the mass

⁸³ Gerv. Hoveden.

⁸⁴ Vita ib. Gerv.

BOOK which begins with the words, *princes sat and*
L *spoke against me*; alluding, doubtless, to his own
 1164. situation, and thus invoking the aid of the first
 martyr to the christian cause.

Descending from the altar, clothed in part, as he was, in his sacred vestments, he proceeded to the court, where the king with his barons waited his arrival; and at the door, he took into his own hand the cross, which his chaplain carried. The action surprised the bishops, who had come out to meet him, and they endeavoured to prevent it, knowing how much it would irritate the king. "Let me be your crossbearer," said the bishop of Hereford, "for so it becomes me."—"No," replied the prelate, "this cross is my safeguard: it shall tell them, under what prince I combat."—"If the king sees you enter with these arms," observed Gilbert of London, striving to wrest the cross from him, "he will unsheath his own: it will then appear, which are most to be relied on."—"That I leave to God;" replied Becket.—"Hitherto your folly has been great," rejoined the bishop, "and, I perceive, you are not disposed to quit it".

The king understanding, in what form the archbishop was entering the hall, rose hastily from

³ Hoveden. Gerv. Vita ut sup.

his seat, and with the barons retired to an inner chamber. The prelate, with a few attendants, then took his seat, and on the opposite side sat the bishops. With the king all was confusion. He proposed first to attack the primate, on the old question of the immunities of the clergy. From this he was dissuaded, the courtiers telling him, that it would surely again unite the bishops to their primate, and they should have another army arrayed against them. The bishops were called in. To them, in the strongest terms, he complained of the intended insult; that to come thus armed into his court, was to brand himself, he said, and the whole assembly, with the odious charge of some treacherous design. But as his rage grew immoderate, stimulated by the courtiers speeches, even the primate's enemies were shocked. They expected he would be instantly massacred. Roger of York quitted the room, saying to his chaplains: "Let us be gone. It becomes not us to witness what will soon befall the primate of Canterbury." Bartholomew of Exeter ran to him: "My father," said he, "have pity on yourself and us. On your account we shall all this day perish. The king has ordered, that whoever dares to stand by you, shall be punished as an enemy to the state. Jocelin of Salisbury and William of Norwich, who have spoken in your favor, are just now, it is said, dragged out to punish-

BOOK I. 1164. "ment." — Fly then; for thou knowest not what
 "appertains to God;" said the primate, looking
 at him, firm and dauntless, and not moving
 from his seat⁸⁶.

The bishops, in the mean time, who remained
 in the inner room with the king, seeing the
 danger which threatened, and uncertain what to
 do, after much altercation among themselves,
 proposed a last measure, which, they hoped,
 would be successful. "We will cite our pri-
 mate," said they to the king. "before the
 pope: there we can bring our charges; and we
 doubt not, shall procure his deposition." —
 The proposal pleased Henry: and the bishops in a
 body hastening to the primate, the arrogant and
 frothy Hilary of Chichester thus, in the name of
 all addressed him⁸⁷.

"Until now," said he, "you have been our
 archbishop, and it was our duty to obey you.
 But as you swore fealty to our lord the king,
 that is, to defend his life, his limbs, and
 worldly honor, and to observe the customs of
 the realm, which he required, and now you
 strive to overthrow those customs, which prin-
 cipally regard that worldly honor; therefore
 we pronounce you guilty of perjury, and to

⁸⁶ Hoveden. Gerv. Vita ut supra.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

“ a perjured primate we owe no further obedience. B O O K
 “ Ourselves and our possessions we commit to the I.
 “ protection of our lord the pope, and we cite 1164.
 “ you to his presence, there to answer to our
 “ charges.” Thus saying, he named a day. —
 “ I hear you,” said the archbishop.”

It is extraordinary, that the question of the *customs* should be here revived by the bishops, and on it only should their charge be grounded, when it had not once been publicly mentioned at Northampton, nor any accusation of perjury been preferred against the primate. But the truth is; perjury was deemed a canonical crime, and could it be proved, a sentence of deposition, they thought, might be obtained from his holiness; whereas the royal charges were all of them, as produced at Northampton, of a civil nature. To gratify the king's passion, it mattered not, how informal the prosecution was, or on what charges it was founded, and the bishops, it seems, from ignorance, or fear, or malice, or interest, were disposed to go any lengths.

After Hilary had spoken, the bishops went over to the opposite seats, and a pause of silence ensued. The door of the inner room then opened, and the barons, with a great crowd, headed by the earls of Leicester and Cornwall, entering,

“ Gerv. Vita.

BOOK I. 1164. walked up to the primate. The earl of Leicester said: "The king orders, that you appear before him to answer to his charges, as you promised: otherwise, hear your sentence." — "My sentence!" cried the primate, rising from his seat: "Yes, son earl, but do you hear first. — You well know, my son, with what friendship and with what fidelity, I served my lord the king. On that account, it was his pleasure, that I should be promoted to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, God knows, against my own will. For I knew my own incapacity; and I acquiesced, not so much for the love of God, as for his love. This is sufficiently evident, since God to-day withdraws himself and the king from me. At my election, in the presence of prince Henry, who had received orders from his royal father, it was asked, in what condition I was given to the church? when answer was made; *free and discharged from every bond of the court.* But if free; I cannot now be bound to answer to those things, from which I was then discharged; nor will I." — "This," observed the earl, "is different from what, the other day, was reported to the king." — The primate proceeded: "Still listen, my son. As much as the soul is superior to the body, by so much it is your duty, to obey God and me, rather than an earthly monarch.

" Neither law, nor reason, permits, that a child
 " judge or condemn his parent. Wherefore,
 " I decline the tribunal of the king and his
 " barons, submitting myself, under God, to
 " the judgment of our lord the pope, to whom,
 " in the presence of you all, I now *appeal*. The
 " church of Canterbury, my order and dignity,
 " with all that pertains to them, I commit to
 " God and the protection of the holy see. And
 " you, my brethren and fellow-bishops, who
 " have preferred the obedience of man to that of
 " God, I cite you to the presence of our lord
 " the pope. Thus guarded by the power of
 " the catholic church and the apostolic see, I
 " retire hence".

BOOK

I.

1164.

The solemn address was taken to the king; and
 the primate turned round to leave the hall. As
 he passed through the crowd, he was insulted;
 and some called out, that he retired like a
 perjured traitor. Looking sternly at the revilers,
 he said: " Did the sacredness of my character
 " permit it, I would by arms defend myself,
 " against that charge of perjury and treason."
 The outer gate was locked; but one of his attend-
 ants perceived the keys on the wall, and opening
 the door, they went out; and amidst the accla-
 mations of the clergy and people, gratulating him

" Gerv. Vita.

BOOK on his delivery, and a crowd of beggars, he
 I. reached the convent where he lodged. — In the
 1164. evening, the bishops of Worcester, Hereford,
 and Rochester, who were attached to the primate,
 waited on the king, in his name, requesting that
 he might be permitted to quit the realm. “To-
 morrow,” replied Henry, “I will lay his
 request before the council.” But at night-fall,
 two noblemen, whose solemn asseverations could
 not be doubted, informed the archbishop, that
 certain persons of high rank had conspired against
 his life, who were mutually pledged to perpetrate
 their design. This, it seems, determined him to
 attempt an immediate escape; wherefore, ordering
 a couch to be prepared in the church, as if he
 meant to take sanctuary there, before midnight,
 attended by two monks and a servant, he left
 the convent, and soon afterwards the walls of
 Northampton, passing northward through a gate
 which was left unguarded^o. — It was Tuesday
 the sixteenth of October.

Thus closed the council of Northampton,
 which, during six days, exhibited a scene of
 that violence and disorder, which marked the
 judicial proceedings of the age. The meeting of
 Clarendon, though somewhat more decorous,
 was not better fitted to the purposes of distributive

^o Vita. Gerv. Hoveden.

justice and general legislation. A subject of some importance opens before me, and the obvious connexion of things demands elucidation. But as so many authors have written on the origin of feudal government, and of its particular character, as established in this country by the conqueror and his immediate successors, for me it can only be necessary, briefly to trace some general outlines, that no want of evidence may bewilder, or obstacles impede the easy progress of, my reader. I have no favorite theory to present, but such as the facts of history, as they occur, have formed, and which the evolving series of events may gradually tend to establish.

BOOK

I.

1164.

That the government, introduced at the conquest, was not, at once, completed, and that even in the present reign, it was, in many instances, fluctuating and undefined, though a hundred years had elapsed from its first establishment, will not be denied by him who has reasoned from experience, and read with caution. The new system, we know, reluctantly coalesced with the Saxon laws, which breathed a better spirit, and to which laws even the conquerors themselves soon professed an attachment. Besides, it has been often said that, even in countries where it had no such obstacles to contend with, the feudal form of government never moved on any certain and unvarying principles, whereby

Brief account
of the Anglo-
Norman go-
vernment and
polity.

BOOK I. the lives and property of the vassal were secured, or the power and prerogative of the sovereign were ascertained. Where not the cool deliberations of statesmen, weighing the passions of men and calculating contingencies, had spoken, but the hasty decision of warriors, whom no foresight guided, had sketched the rude outline of polity and legislation, much necessarily was left to the precarious issue of events, to human caprice, and to such circumstances, as all the varying changes of power on one hand, and of submission on the other, should progressively generate. If the advantages of the feudal system were many, more were its inconveniences; of which no better proof can be required, than the evidence of its decline in all the kingdoms of Europe, as the rights of man, from the growing importance of every member to the greater good of the community, were more clearly understood. But I believe, all circumstances duly weighed, it will be found that, at this time, the feudal polity, imperfect as it was, was best adapted to the general state of things in this country, and on the continent of Europe. I confine myself to England.

Power of the
king.

The power of the king was *monarchical*: he was the source of all dignity and command, and agreeably to the first principles of the system, the whole landed property of the realm belonged

to him. Originally acquired by the right of conquest, he had distributed amongst his followers such portions of it, as their services or his own partiality had decided, and this on certain conditions, which seem never to have been separated from the act of assignment, and on which the notion of feudal property did essentially rest. The principal condition was, the return of *service* for the favor or *benefice* conferred. The duties then of the sovereign and his vassals were built on the noble foundation of *bounty* and *gratitude*. The property assigned was denominated a *fief*; and fiefs which, at first, were revocable at will, acquired, in process of time, a more permanent tenure: they were granted during life, and then became hereditary in families, so long as the original condition of *service* was complied with. This service was chiefly *military*, and the king could call for it, as the exigences of the times might seem to require. — In his hands was lodged the *executive* power; and without his assent no laws could be made or altered. It will even be seen, in the course of this history, that the royal edict alone was admitted to have the full force of law. But in the regular order of government, a more temperate form prevailed, and the conduct of the sovereign was directed by the advice of a council.

B O O K

I.

National
Council.

The reader has recently witnessed two *national* assemblies, summoned by the king. They were what our historians call, the *great council*; and the stated times of its meeting were the three great festivals of christmas, easter, and whitsuntide. The barons, and the immediate tenants of the crown, attended; for it was a part of that *service* which, as vassals, they owed to their supreme lord. In the king and this council, agreeably to the spirit of the feudal institution, resided the *legislative* power; and for obvious reasons, it was his wish, that it should be often convened, and be fully attended. There, at the head of his vassals, he appeared in the lustre of majesty, ordaining laws, or demanding justice against those who had violated the compact which bound them to their lord. In the first capacity he was at Clarendon; in the second at Northampton. But often parade only and festivity were intended. The attendance of the vassal marked his subordination, and it served to check that independence which the great barons much affected, and which ever drew strength from the habits of power and patronage, they contracted at their own castles. By the same meetings, as their consent and advice were deemed necessary, as well in the enactment of laws, as in the infliction of punishment, the arbitrary power of the crown was also controuled. But in the second case, unless when the object of

prosecution was a patriotic or powerful vassal, the king, by his authority or his disproportionate influence, was able to awe the meeting, to bias their suffrages, and to bend all to his will. This happened in the trial we have seen. The impetuous temper of Henry, in a cause, which he and his courtiers had the address to render unpopular, not only exposed the primate to his utmost vengeance, but it could intimidate into a weak compliance even those, whom every motive should have roused to a manly opposition.

The constituent members of this council, as I have said, were the immediate tenants of the crown, which comprised the archbishops, bishops, many abbots, and some priors; the barons, under which denomination the earls were included; and all such, whether knights, or others, who held their fees by military, or less honorable, service. They were all the king's homagers, his men, as to life, limb, and earthly honor. When Domesday-book was framed, the number of these vassals did not amount to seven hundred. — From the sentence of this court there was no appeal, unless, as we have seen, in matters of an ecclesiastical complexion. And that such appeals were then, agreeably to the usages of the nation, lawful, is evident from the conduct of the bishops, who, at Northampton, with the consent of the king, cited the primate before

BOOK I. their lord the pope. Nor was the eighth statute of Clarendon, as it was afterwards explained, meant to prohibit such appeals. But when the cause was purely civil, this appeal, though practised, as we saw, by Becket, must have been originally abusive. Churchmen did homage to the king for the fiefs they held of him, and by the act became his vassals. As such, therefore, they were amenable to his tribunal, and should have stood to the verdict of their peers. But, at this time, their great aim was to withdraw themselves from all secular jurisdiction, and to establish a new order of things. The appointment of spiritual courts, by the conqueror, tended to forward the new system, and the concessions of his successors helped on the same. The eleventh article of Clarendon, went to the restoration of the ancient system, and to renew that connexion between the secular and clerical orders, which seems so have prevailed before the conquest. But the evil, supported by the canonists of the age, had taken too deep root, to be removed by desultory efforts. Such were those of Henry.

To look for the *commons*, (as they are now denominated,) in the assembly I am describing, that is, men who were not immediate tenants of the crown, argues little knowledge of the feudal institution, in which, a gradual subordination uniformly prevailed. The subvassals of

the realm constituted an inferior order of men, whose duty was paid to their immediate, or *mesne*, lord, under whom they held their fees, or lands; on whom they were dependent; and who was interposed between them and the throne. In relation to him; they stood in the same capacity, that he and the other barons did to the king: these were peers of the realm; the subvassals, or *vavassors*, for so they were sometimes called, were peers of the barony to which they belonged. With what propriety then, might they claim a seat in the great legislative assembly, who already were fully represented there, as far as any representation was, at that time, intended; and who, besides, were members of a court, in all things, co-ordinate with their station? The barons, in their castles, had their own courts, appointed to make such arrangements, as the nature of their tenures, or the order of vassalage required, and to decide such suits as arose among their dependents. Attended by his officers and retainers, here the petty sovereign resided, in his commands often more arbitrary than his monarch, and generally more servilely obeyed, because his vassals had not the power of resistance, which the lord himself possessed. But also, as he lived with them in splendor and hospitality, sometimes, as the father of a family, they were much

BOOK attached to him. His court, in miniature,
I. resembled that of his sovereign, and his ministers were honored with similar offices and titles. Nothing then, it seems, but the love of controversy, in violation of an obvious system, and, what is more, of the unequivocal representations of contemporary writers, could have impelled certain men to draw the subvassals of the baronage from their proper sphere, and place them in seats which, as yet, were unadapted to them.

King's court. Besides the national council, which I have described, was the king's court, denominated *curia regis*, which generally attended his person, and wherein himself often sat to hear causes, and to pronounce judgment, in civil and criminal suits, among his barons. Here, likewise, were managed the concerns of the royal revenue. In the absence of the king, the chief or *grand justiciary* presided, who was the first magistrate in the state, nearest to the sovereign in power and authority. To this court, as we have seen, Becket was cited, in the cause of John, marshal of the exchequer, and was fined for non-appearance. Originally few appeals were made to the *curia regis*, all causes being determined at their proper tribunals, in the counties, and in the courts of barony; but, as the oppression of the nobles grew, and the science of law became more intricate, and the influence of the

crown extended, appeals were common, the subordinate judicatures lost their credit, and business accumulated in the hands of the king's ministers. The reader will witness the progress of this change, which, from a combination of causes, tended much to increase the royal power.

— The other officers of this court were, the constable, marshal, seneschal, chamberlain, treasurer, and chancellor. Such barons, as thought proper, might also attend. The *curia regis*, at this time, seems also to have been called the court of *exchequer*, (*Scaccarium*,) from a chequered cloth which covered the table, at which the officers sat; and it comprehended the whole business, which is now shared among our four courts, the chancery, the king's bench, the common pleas, and the exchequer.

The name of *chancellor* having often been mentioned, it may be proper to observe that, at this time, he had no distinct court, in which he presided. The great seal was in his custody: he supervised all charters, and all acts and precepts, which issued in the king's court, and put the seal to them. He was chief counsellor to the king, and, as we saw in the case of Becket, generally attended on his person. The vacant bishoprics and abbeyes were often left in his custody.

B O O K

I.

County court.

A third *court* was that of the *county* or hundred, descended, it is thought, from the Saxons, the office of which was to judge between the vassals of different baronies. The sheriff, then called *viscount*, presided, an officer appointed by the king, and in whose department, besides, it was, to keep the public peace, to stock and improve the royal demesne, and to collect the revenue. The greatest barons were obliged to attend the county courts, and to assist the sheriff in the administration of his office. But the resort and business even of these courts, we shall see, were gradually absorbed by the extension of the royal judicature, in the appointment of *itinerant judges*, by which means, the whole *judicial* power was ultimately lodged, with the *executive*, in the hands of the sovereign.

Revenue of
the crown.

The power of the Norman kings was also supported by a great and independent revenue, the principal branches of which were: —

1. The *royal demesne* or *crown-lands*, which were very extensive, and comprehended, beside manors, many of the towns and chief cities of England. As recorded in *Domesday-book*, the royal manors, at that time, were fourteen hundred and twenty-two; and we know that their number was afterwards much augmented. This demesne was not legally alienable; but it

will be seen, how wantonly it was sometimes disposed of, and how arbitrarily resumed. BOOK I.

2. *Escheats*; under which term was comprehended, all lands which became vested in the crown, by devolution, forfeiture, seizure, or some similar title, that is, in default of heirs, or for crimes and breach of duty towards the superior lord. These escheats the prince was permitted to alienate, though gradually they were confounded with the *ancient demesne*, which they contributed to extend.

3. *Feudal profits*; which were the reliefs to be paid, on the death of his ancestor, by every heir that held his lands by barony, or knight's-service, that is, by every military tenant *in capite*, when he took possession of his inheritance. Before *Magna Charta*, these reliefs were not limited by law, and therefore often arbitrarily imposed.—*Wardships* were another feudal profit. During the nonage of his vassals, the king received the revenues of their estates, allowing what he thought proper for their education and maintenance; nor afterwards could they marry, either male or female, without his consent, to obtain which large sums were often given.

4. The *ferms* of counties, generally let to the sheriff; and of towns, burghs, and gilds, situated in the royal demesne.

B O O K

I.

5. *Fines* and *amerciaments*, of many kinds, in civil and criminal cases, and for forest-trespases. Fines were reduced to three general heads: fines *for liberties*, that is, for grants and confirmation of liberties, or for franchises and exemptions, of all which the instances were numberless. — Fines in *law-proceedings*, that is, fines to have justice and right; fines for writs, pleas, trials, and judgments; fines for expedition or speeding the right, fines for stopping, or delays of pleas, trials, or judgments. Proceedings most iniquitous, but the source of great wealth, to obviate which the forty-seventh clause of Magna Charta was decreed: — Fines of a *mixed nature*, that is, for the king's favor, or that he would remit his displeasure, for his aid and protection, to be released out of prison, and for acquittals in divers cases, for leave to hold or quit certain offices, for permission to trade, to open mines, and for many other things of a miscellaneous nature. — *Amerciaments*: which were levied for crimes, trespases, and defaults, the occasions of which were manifold, particularly under the head of the forest-laws, when the king possessed sixty-eight forests, thirteen chases, and seven hundred and eighty-one parks, in different parts of England.

6. *Aid*; which was deemed an honorable service or duty, rendered by a free vassal to his lord, and of which were three sorts due to the crown,

by common right. Aid to make the king's eldest son a knight, to marry his eldest daughter, and to ransom his person when taken in war. It was paid by all the king's immediate tenants, whether they held their fees by barony, or knight's service, or by serjeanty, or by rent-service, socage, or other service, of which many instances will occur. The sums assessed, generally *per fee*, and the mode of raising it, varied at different times.

7. *Scutage*:—this also was a duty, or service; arising out of baronies and knights fees. It denoted *servitium scuti*, the service of the shield, and was rendered thus:—for every knight's fee, the service of one knight; and as baronies were composed of knights fees, they were charged according to the number of fees, whereof each barony, by its original enfeoffment, did consist. The service of scutage was performed, either personally in the king's army, or by pecuniary commutation, as we saw in the war of Toulouse; and as the latter mode of discharging it became usual, the term *scutage* is often to be understood to mean that pecuniary commutation only, money in lieu of personal service. The sums assessed on each fee, and levied by the king's commissioners, were likewise very variable.

8. *Tallage*; which was a general duty levied on the royal demesne, sometimes called *donum*;

BOOK sometimes *assisa*, and sometimes *hidage*, or *carucage*,
I. that is, so much for each hide or caruc of land, holden by base or inferior tenure. — A *hide* of land is generally thought to have been as much as a single plough could till in a year, or as much as would be sufficient to maintain a gentleman's family for that time, and in this sense must have varied according to the nature of the soil. A knight's fee seems to have consisted of two hides of land, or of two hides and a half.

9. *Customs*: these, from the obvious import of the word, were duties paid by merchants and traders, for their merchandises imported or exported, and for commodities conveyed along the Thames, and some other rivers. But as the trade of the nation, excepting, perhaps, in the article of wine, was not great, no large revenue was raised from this quarter.

I have stated the principal articles of the royal revenue, which, though considerable in their general amount, constituted no fixed and stated income, much of it arising from incidental and varying profits. But the mode of assessment, as well as the sums assessed, were generally vexatious to the vassals, and the majesty of the crown was often villified by the unworthy practices, to which it had recourse, and the extortions of its ministers. Till the reign of Henry I. the rents from the demesne lands were usually

paid in provisions, and other supplies for the household; but these afterwards were commuted into money, which was carried into the treasury.

—I wish to observe that, what I have said of the king and his immediate vassals, in regard to his feudal powers, and many of the branches of revenue, must be applied to the barons and their vassals, in a scale of co-ordinate subordination. For they also had their tenants, who held of them by subinfeudation, and were therefore entitled to *escheats*, to *reliefs*, to *wardship*, to *fines*, and *amerciaments*, to *aid*, to *scutage*, and to *tallage*, though the words themselves are not, I believe, always applied to them. Nor were the barons less arbitrary, or less rapacious, than their supreme lord, by whose conduct they seemed ambitious to square their general deportment.

The tenures introduced by the Normans gave Army. strength to the kingdom. For the nobility were foldiers, paid and maintained by the lands they held; and their vassals were again foldiers, supported by a similar arrangement. Thus, without the expense, and the danger to liberty of a standing army, forces sufficient to guard the country from invasion, and to serve the crown in foreign wars, were always kept up; the resource seemed as fixed and exhaustless, as the lands themselves on which they lived. Such a force also, composed of men, whose property in the realm, and

BOOK whose rank in life, naturally interested in the best
I. welfare of the country, was admirably, it should seem, adapted to watch the designs of an ambitious monarch, and to oppose them: but then the same tenures which gave them this power, too often likewise enabled them, turbulent and ambitious as they were, to disturb the public peace, to throw off their allegiance, and, within the bounds of their own domains, to exercise the tyranny they would not brook in their sovereign.

When the occasion called for arms, the king summoned his barons and tenants *in capite*, holding knights fees, to be ready to do their service in his army, according to the number of their fees, and quantity of their tenure. The summons was directed to the sheriffs of the counties, and the place of rendezvous named, at which, on a stated day, they were to appear with their arms and horses. Each baron then, in like manner, summoned his own military tenants; and they waited on him in arms, ready to march at his command. Thus was the feudal army formed; but the period of service, at their own charges, was of forty days only, after which they were at liberty to return home, or it became the duty of the king to maintain them. Those who did not obey the summons were amerced.

amerced. But as such armies were ill calculated for long wars, or for foreign service, the commutation often took place, which I mentioned under the name of *scutage*, whereby large sums of money were raised, and the prince was enabled to purchase a mercenary force, more subservient to his will, and better practised in military discipline. When the tenant *in capite* paid *scutage* to the king, he was entitled to have *scutage* from his own tenants, for the military fees they held of him, and he might compel them by distress. — The *spiritual* barons, whose fees were charged with military service, were not bound to personal duty. They sent soldiers in their stead, or they fined to the king, that is, they paid a *scutage* proportioned to their fees. But though exempted from the service of arms, as the canons of the church also ordained, and the decency of their profession seemed to require, bishops, as we shall see, often appeared in the field, regardless of the privilege which consigned them to the inglorious occupations of prayer and preaching. Ecclesiastics who held lands in *franc almoign*, that is, under the obligation of praying for the soul of the granter or feoffer, were free from every military duty. Under this tenure the church held great possessions, to obviate the effect of which, the statute of *mortmain* was afterwards enacted.

BOOK The *navy*, at this time, was very inconsiderable.

I. During the reigns of the Saxon kings, while the

Navy. nation was infested by the northern corsairs, its maritime force is represented, on some occasions, to have been raised to an unparalleled height. But we know with what success the invaders repeated their attacks; to suspend which, a composition was entered into, which subjected the nation to an infamous tribute. This tribute was raised by a hidage or land-tax, called *danegeld*, and which, though, originally intended for the purpose, I have mentioned, continued to be levied, even after the conquest, when invasions threatened, and by some moderns has been improperly considered as a fund for the perpetual support of the navy.—The ships of war, of which we read, were *gallies*, with one or two tiers of oars, to the prow of which was fixed a piece of wood, called a spur, designed to strike and pierce the ships of the enemy.—The *cinque ports*, by their tenures, and some other maritime towns, were the principal support of the navy, unless on alarming occasions, when *danegeld* was levied. But the whole subject is very obscurely treated by the historians of the age. During the reign of Henry, who was master of almost all the French coast, and when no invasion was apprehended, little attention seems to have been given to naval concerns. We shall behold his son, in the pride

of chivalry, sailing to the east, at the head of a
puissant armament.

BOOK
I.

Laws.

In times antecedent to the conquest, various compilations had been made of the English laws; but that of the Confessor, as it was the last, and probably the most comprehensive, acquired the greatest reputation. What these laws were, has never been specifically ascertained; because, as it seems generally admitted, many of them might rather be denominated *customs*, than legal statutes, and, as such, would be more liable to change. That there was an *unwritten* law, received under the name of *customs*, is plain from the transactions of Clarendon; and to them the lapse of years and the charters of kings, would give a more lasting stability. Whatever were the laws, either collected or enacted by the confessor, *common*, *penal*, or *mixed*, under the general denomination of *customs*, them the conqueror received and confirmed to the nation by a statute, with such *additions* as he deemed *beneficial*. The same code was confirmed by the succeeding charters of Henry I. Stephen, and, as has been mentioned, of the present king. On this subject more will be said hereafter. The *common law* of the land, therefore, was that of their Saxon ancestors, with some additions and amendments, as the state of things might require, and it is remarkable that the Norman settlers, with an

BOOK uncommon predilection, soon became attached
I. to it. So well did its spirit comport with liberty
 and the general rights of men!

Degrees of
 nobility.

The degrees of *nobility* have been succinctly mentioned: 1. *Earls* which was a hereditary honor, originally conferred by the king, and limited as to number by that of the counties, in which they held an official superintendence. Sometimes, by marriage or the course of descent, more than one earldom united in the same person, rendering him, if factious, a vassal dangerous to the throne, and to the peace of the nation. Some earldoms, by original grants, were more powerful than others, as that of Chester, which possessed, within its limits, almost a regal jurisdiction. To every earldom was annexed a *barony*, whereby their feudal service, with its several dependent duties, was alone ascertained; that is, the tenure of barony, and not of earldom, constituted the legal vassal of the crown. Each earl was, at the same time, a baron; as were the bishops, and some abbots, and priors of orders. — 2. *Barons*: They were originally created by feoffment, the honor being properly territorial, and descending to male or female issue in a regular succession, according to the right of primogeniture. Baronies were annexed to certain lands, and these were composed of knights fees, charged with personal service and

other burdens, agreeably to the number of the fees; for, whatever it was, either extent or value of the land, which determined this number, we find that the baronies were very unequally divided. Each fee, as I have observed, was charged with the service of one knight. We read of baronies which consisted of three, ten, or twenty fees, and of others, as that of the honor of Gloucester, in the reign of king John, which consisted of three hundred and twenty seven. More than one barony might be vested in the same person. — Besides the military service, to which every baron was obliged, in virtue of his fief, he was also bound to attend the king in his supreme court, to assist in his judgments, and to give him faithful counsel, in the concerns of state and in the judicial proceedings with his peers. To what contributions, as a tenant in chief of the crown, he was liable, has been related. — Some nobles held their lands of the crown by *grand-serjeanty*, which was not always a military service, whereby they were bound to carry the king's banner, or lance, to bear his sword at the coronation, or to be his sewer, his carver, or his butler. This was deemed the highest and most illustrious feudal service, and the tenure, consequently, was most honorable. So exalted, in the spirit of the constitution, was the idea entertained of *royalty*!

BOOK

I.

But there was an honorary dignity, which, in those days, could give a new lustre even to the crown: I mean, *the order of knighthood*, not now a novel institution, and which, in its origin and object, partook of the religious and military character. The ceremony of initiation, in various countries, was very similar; the essential part of which seemed to consist, in girding the knight with his sword, in putting on his feet a pair of gilt spurs, and in striking him gently with a sword on the neck or shoulders, whilst the minstrels, with their songs and music, graced the solemnity. At first, none but kings and princes, and men of tried valor and approved virtue, were admitted to the honor: but as every knight had a power to make other knights, the number soon increased, and the merits of the candidates were less scrupulously regarded. Their occupations, independently of the romantic engagements they entered into, were excellently adapted to give energy to the principle of honor, and to teach the duties of war: even the amusements of chivalry, in tilts and tournaments, were a perpetual discipline and school of prowess.—According to the number of fees which composed his barony, each nobleman, as has been said, was bound to furnish his quota of knights; but from ostentation, or when his income allowed it, he retained many more in his

service, as was related of Becket, in the war of Toulouse. They were his companions in war, at the chase, and in the festive hours of domestic amusements. The knights were attended by *esquires*, who were themselves candidates for, and were generally promoted, to the dignity of knighthood. It should, however, be noticed, that the rank of knighthood was that of gentry, and not of nobility. In Latin they were called *milites*.—I must also observe that, as there were many knights-fees, that is, lands or tenements charged with military service, which were not annexed to baronies, they might be possessed by the knights themselves, or by other inferior tenants, who, in their own persons, were bound to discharge the service.

After the nobility and knights, came this order of men, who, as holding of the crown by the honorable service of arms, were themselves deemed honorable. They formed the lower rank of gentry; but, not many years afterwards, they were compelled, under pain of forfeiting their fees, to be girt with the sword of knighthood.—To the same rank, in a lower degree, seem also to have belonged the other tenants of the crown, that is, such as held lands by *soccage*, or *petit serjeanty*, and the inhabitants of cities, and boroughs, and castles, who held of the king, under certain stipulated services or

Inferior ranks,
and bondmen.

BOOK I. rents. — The tenure of *focage*, in propriety of expression, comprehended them all; for it has been defined, “that every tenure, which is “not a tenure in chivalry, is a tenure in foc-
“cage.” What the word *foc* or *focage* properly meant, has not been clearly ascertained; but if it be understood in contradistinction to *military* or *knight's service*, all ambiguity will be sufficiently removed, and the whole property of the nation will be conceived as divided into knights fees and focage tenures. *Socmen* are sometimes styled *freeholders*, (*liberé tenentes*,) not as if they held their lands free from all charge of rent or service, (for, at this time, there seem to have been no such tenures,) but in the sense just mentioned, as not bound to military service.

To this order of men, in a regularly descending scale, succeeded the various denominations of *subvassals*, who, in all things, were the exact counterpart of the tenants in chief of the crown. To say more on the subject would be superfluous. A baron on his domain, in the distribution of his property, in the order of his retainers and tenants, and in the exaction of rents, services, and dues, was the sovereign in miniature.

After these came a race of men, who, placed on the footing of domestic animals, possessed no better privileges than they. They were of two sorts: such as, having nothing they might call

their own, termed *villeins in gross*, were immediately bound to the person of their lord, and his heirs, for whom they worked, and by whom they were maintained: the others, called *villeins regardant to a manor*, to which they were annexed, rented small portions of land, at the will of their lord, for which they tilled his soil, and performed all other predial works. From their inability to quit their station arose the peculiar hardship of their servitude.—These bondmen were, doubtless, of Saxon origin, having descended, with their lands, to the present possessors. But it was some mitigation of their state, that their lives and limbs were under the protection of the king, (for a lord that killed his slave, was as liable to be punished, as if he had killed a freeman,) and the few goods they possessed were secured from all hands, but those of their masters.—Every lord might infranchise his slave; and the laws and policy of the Normans were peculiarly favorable to it. One of the laws of the conqueror enacts: “ If any one is
 “ willing to free his slave, let him deliver him
 “ by his right hand to the sheriff, in the full
 “ county court, and proclaim him discharged
 “ by manumission, from the yoke of his servitude;
 “ and let him show him the doors open
 “ and his way free, and put into his hands the
 “ arms of a freeman, namely, a lance and a

BOOK I. "sword: which being done, he is made a
 "freeman." Also if a villein, who had fled
 from his lord, remained unclaimed, for a year
 and a day, on the king's demesne lands, he
 gained his freedom; or, for the same time, in
 any *privileged*, that is, chartered, town, and had
 been received into their community, as a citizen.
 —Thus, as the practice of infranchisements grew
 more frequent, the ignominious state gradually
 expired: those who held in villenage became
 copyholders, and the domestic and predial slaves
 were made free servants and laborers. The
 sun of liberty shone equally on all."

The progressive delineation of events, as it will
 receive light from the short sketch I have exhi-
 bited, of the Anglo-Norman government and
 polity, so will it serve to illustrate what, perhaps,
 may still appear too imperfect and obscure in
 the description. Other matters will also arise to
 extend the view, to give harmony to the parts,
 and to complete the general plan.

"Madox Hist. of Exch. Tindal on Rapin. Hume's
 Hist. append. ii. Hist. of Hen. II. vol. ii. Hoveden,
 Gervasius, and others.

END OF BOOK I.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
REIGN
OF
KING HENRY THE SECOND.

BOOK II.

The primate escapes into Flanders. — Henry sends ambassadors to France. — They appear before Alexander. — Becket goes to Sens, and opens his defence. — Henry's revenge. — A conference projected. — Alexander returns to Rome. — Henry suspected of inclining to the antipope, is cleared by Foliot. — War with the Welsh. — The bishop of Lisieux writes to Becket. — Heretics punished. — Becket appointed legate, writes to the king. — Henry goes to France. — Appeals to Rome. — The primate pronounces his censures. — The English bishops appeal, and address the primate. — He answers. — Writes also to Foliot. — Is driven from Pontigny. — John of Oxford's embassy. — Affairs of Italy and Rome. — Legates arrive in France. Conferences of Gisors and Argentan. — Hostilities in France and Flanders. — Death of Matilda. — Frederick escapes from Lombardy. — Embassy from Con-

Constantinople to Alexander.—Commutations in France, which end in a general peace.—Henry and the primate meet.—Singular behaviour of Louis, and Henry's fears.—Nuncios arrive from Rome.—Various fruitless conferences.—Severe edict of the king.—New commissioners appointed.—Prince Henry crowned.—Henry and the primate are reconciled.—Difficulties are raised.—The primate returns to England.—Is assassinated.—His character.

BOOK **W**HETHER from fear, which deranges
II. every settled purpose, or from indetermination, or
1164. from a hope that the pursuit of his enemies might
 The primate escapes into Flanders. be thus eluded, Becket, on leaving the walls of Northampton, took his journey northward. It would be expected, that he would make for the coast nearest to the French shore. On the second day he arrived at Lincoln, a distance of more than fifty miles, whence going to a hermitage in the fens, he rested three days. The retirement of the place gave him confidence; and here he planned his new route, changed his dress to that of a common monk, and was called brother Christian. In this disguise, turning to the south-east, they again set forward, travelling only by night, through unfrequented paths, and, during the day, reposing in the cells of the neighbouring convents. They came to Estry

in Kent, a manor belonging to the priory of Canterbury, and not far from that city. For eight days he here remained, unknown to all but one priest, while Herbert de Boseham, the companion of his flight, and his historian, was engaged in providing a small boat at Sandwich. In this boat they embarked, and about the close of the evening of the same day, landed not far from Gravelines in Flanders. It was the beginning of November, and about the fifteenth day since his flight from Northampton. They were four in company¹.

Though the distance from Gravelines was not more than a league, yet the miry road, for they were forced to travel on foot, added to the fatigue of the passage, soon exhausted all the primate's strength. It blew a storm of wind and rain. Cold and wet as it was, he laid himself down on the ground: "I can go no further," said he, "get me some assistance." They procured a horse, and he entered Gravelines. At supper, though he sat in the lowest place, it was observed that their landlord eyed him with uncommon curiosity. His air and dignified manner, and the general cast of his countenance and person, raised him above the level of ordinary men; and fame, besides, had already divulged it in the country, that the archbishop

¹ Vita S. Thom. l. ii. c. 2, 3.

BOOK of Canterbury was flying from the persecution,
 II. of his enemies. The good man communicated
 1164. his suspicions to his wife, and they began to
 treat him with a respect, that gave him little
 pleasure. Their best fruit, and greatest delicacies,
 they brought out, and placed them before
 brother Christian. "Sit down by me," said
 the prelate to his landlord, hoping by the
 familiar offer to quiet his surmises. He fell at
 his feet: "I thank God," said he, "that your
 "lordship has deigned to honor my humble
 roof." "For whom then do you take me?"
 replied Becket: "do you not see that I am a
 "poor monk, called Christian?" "Take what
 "name you will," subjoined the host, "I know
 "you are a great man, and I believe the archbi-
 "shop of Canterbury." To dissemble any longer
 might be dangerous: he therefore frankly owned
 who he was, trusting, by the confidential
 avowal, to secure his fidelity. The next day
 they departed, and the host was their guide².

The reader may wish to know what alarmed
 Becket, landed as he was on another shore. —
 Philip earl of Flanders, and Matthew, his
 brother, earl of Boulogne, besides being nearly
 related to Henry by their mother Sibilla of
 Anjou, had many obligations to him. To the

² Vita S. Tho. l. ii. c. 3, 4.

first he had been guardian, during the absence of his father on a pilgrimage into Asia; and for the other he had procured a wife, Mary, the only surviving child of king Stephen, and with her the rich earldom of Boulogne. Mary had been a nun, and even abbess of Rumsey in Hampshire. Becket, at that time chancellor, opposed the uncanonical measure; but the lady consenting, she was stolen from her convent, and conveyed out of England, with the approbation of the king. — For these reasons, the primate could not rely on the protection of the earls; nor did he know but already they might have been apprized of his flight.

After another fatiguing journey, on foot, they arrived at Clairmarais, a convent near to St. Omer's. Here they were informed, that ambassadors from the king of England, had just entered the walls. The primate, therefore, instantly withdrew to a neighbouring hermitage, leaving two of his companions to watch their motions. The next day, the ambassadors proceeded on their journey, and Becket, being informed that there was nothing to fear, came out from his retirement, and was received, with every testimony of respect, into the abbey of St. Bertin, within the gates of the city³.

³ Vita S. Tho. l. ii. c. 5, 6, Gerv. an. 1164.

BOOK

II.

1164.

Henry sends
ambassadors
to France.

As soon as it had been known at Northampton, that the primate had secretly fled, Henry, much alarmed, took the advice of his council. They did not doubt but he would go over into France; and it was resolved to send ministers to Louis and to the pope, who should accuse the archbishop, and attempt to procure his deposition. A splendid embassy of prelates, clergy, and noblemen, was ordered instantly to depart; and a proclamation was issued, forbidding the servants of the archbishop to be molested, or his effects to be touched. Charged with the important commission, and loaded with presents, which they were commanded to disperse freely in the papal court, the ambassadors were on the sea the same night as Becket, and on the same evening were on the road to St. Omer's. — They went first to the king, who was at Compiègne, and presented the letters they had brought from their master. The letters stated, “that *Thomas*, “*late archbishop of Canterbury*, having fled from “England like a traitor, his majesty was requested “not to admit him into his territories.” “*Late* “*archbishop!*” said the king, interrupting the reader; “and who then has deposed him? — I, “surely, am a king as well as my brother of “England; yet I have not authority to depose “the lowest clerk in my dominions. I knew “this *Thomas*, when he was chancellor to your
king,

“ king, whom he served long and faithfully; and
 “ this now is his recompence, that, when he drives
 “ him from England, he shall not be admitted
 “ into France.” The ambassadors hereon request-
 ed that he would, at least, admonish his holiness
 not to give credit to the suggestions of Becket,
 against their master. To this Louis would not
 engage himself: they, therefore, left Compiègne,
 and repaired to Alexander at Sens*.

B O O K

II.

1164.

The day after, came to Compiègne, Herbert
 de Boscham and his companion, who, step by
 step, had followed the royal embassy. “ Are
 “ you of the primate’s family? ” said the king,
 as they were admitted to his presence. “ We
 “ are: ” they replied. Louis embraced them;
 and they began their story, recounting the
 adventures of their journey, and what their
 master had suffered. The monarch listened with
 attention, and having taken the opinion of his
 council, he dismissed them, with assurances to
 the archbishop, that he had his protection, and
 might rely on a secure asylum near to his throne.
 They hastened to Sens. Here were the king’s
 ambassadors; and their arrival brought no
 welcome news to the court of Alexander. The
 cardinals were aware how much it was their
 interest, not to irritate so powerful and so rich

* Vita c. 1. 7. Gerv. ib.

B O O K a prince as Henry; and they saw the difficulties
II. in which, by showing favor to the primate, they
1164. should soon be involved. Besides, to all of them,
 at least, his cause did not seem to be the cause
 of God and their church. Already, perhaps,
 some part of the rich gifts, which the ambassadors
 bore, had been displayed before them. But
 Alexander, a prelate of great firmness, and
 whose general conduct, through this trying
 controversy, will merit praise, admitted the
 primate's friends to a private audience, and
 treated them with respect'. Yet never had the
 Roman bishop stood in a situation, which de-
 manded the exertion of greater policy, greater
 resolution, and greater forbearance. By support-
 ing Becket, he would expose himself, as things
 then were circumstanced, to the loss of the papal
 chair; and in deserting his cause, he would
 sacrifice, what were deemed, the immunities
 and sacred rights of the universal church.

They appear
 before Alex-
 ander.

The next day, a consistory was called, at
 which the cardinals assisted; and the ambassadors
 came to audience. They were the archbishop of
 York, the bishops of London, of Worcester, of
 Exeter and of Chichester, with three of the king's
 chaplains, and the earl of Arundel, with three
 attendant barons, and a numerous retinue. Gilbert
 of London then addressed his holiness.

^s Vita c. 7, 8.

“ It is you, holy father, whom the care of
 “ the catholic church regards, that they who act
 “ wisely may find protection, and the unwise
 “ be punished. He can have no claim to your
 “ approbation, who, confident in himself, aims
 “ to disturb the concord of his brethren, the
 “ peace of the church, and our monarch’s piety.
 “ Lately, on a trivial occasion, a dissension
 “ arose between the king and the priesthood,
 “ which, by moderate means, might have been
 “ easily extinguished. But my lord of Canterbury,
 “ following his own counsel, and not ours,
 “ proceeded too eagerly, not considering the
 “ malice of the times, and what mischief his
 “ violence might cause. For himself and us he
 “ wove a snare; and had our consent gone with
 “ him, the evil had been greater. But because we
 “ would not concur with his design, he has sought
 “ to turn the blame of his rashness upon us, upon
 “ the king and upon the kingdom. Even, to increase
 “ the odium, when no violence was offered, or
 “ threats made, he fled, according as it is writ-
 “ ten, *the wicked flee when no man pursueth.*”
 “ Brother,” exclaimed the pope, “ forbear.”
 “ My lord, I will,” replied Gilbert. “ I mean
 “ not on his account,” subjoined his holiness,
 “ but on your own.” The bishop was abashed,
 and could proceed no farther.

BOOK

II.

1164.

The vain Hilary of Chichester then rose, and urging the same charge against the primate, unfortunately, in the warmth of his invective, used a wrong conjugation. "A man of his dignity," said he, "ought (*oportuebat*) to have behaved "otherwise." The assembly laughed, and Hilary was reduced to silence

The archbishop of York, observing how ill his brethren had succeeded, spoke with more discretion. "To no one, holy father, are the "manners and inclinations of the primate of "Canterbury better known, than to me. Such "has ever been his disposition, that the resolution "he has once adopted, he will not easily relinquish. "Wherefore it may be believed, that he has too "lightly engaged in this obstinate contest, from "which no other means, in my opinion, can "reclaim him, than the weighty interference "of your sacred authority."

"There is no need of many words," observed the bishop of Exeter: "The cause cannot be "determined in the absence of the primate: we "therefore ask for legates, who may judge and "decide between him and our lord the king."

The earl of Arundel, surrounded by his knights, stood in the consistory, and when the bishops had concluded, he desired to be heard. Silence was ordered. He came forward, and in the English language spoke thus. — "My lord,

“ we illiterate laymen are utterly ignorant of what
 “ the bishops have just said; wherefore, as well
 “ as we can, we must ourselves declare what our
 “ commission is. We come not here to dispute,
 “ or to cast reproaches on any man, particularly
 “ in the presence of so great a personage, to
 “ whose nod and authority the whole world, as
 “ in duty, bows the head. But we come, as is
 “ manifest, to lay before you and the Roman
 “ court, the devotion and love, which our lord
 “ the king has ever borne, and still bears to you.
 “ And who are we? The greatest and most noble
 “ whom all his dominions could supply, arch-
 “ bishops, bishops, earls, and barons. Greater
 “ than these he had not, or he would have sent
 “ them, to attest his reverence to you and to
 “ your church. To this we add, the fidelity and
 “ respect of our royal master, which yourself,
 “ in your exaltation to the pontificate, first
 “ experienced, when to your will he submitted
 “ himself, his subjects, and all his possessions.
 “ Nor is there, we believe, in the christian world,
 “ a prince more religious or devout than he, or
 “ who more desires, by gentle means, to maintain
 “ the blessings of concord. And my lord of
 “ Canterbury also, in his own degree and order,
 “ is as well instructed, and in the concerns of
 “ his charge is as discreet and prudent; though,
 “ as some have thought, he may be sometimes

BOOK

II.

1164.

“ too keen and contentious. Were it not for
 “ the present difference, the church and state
 “ would be mutually happy in peace and con-
 “ cord, under so good a prince, and so excellent
 “ a pastor. It is therefore our earnest request,
 “ that you would apply your gracious endeavours
 “ to remove this difference, and to give us back
 “ peace and friendship.”

The address, which spoke the good sense, the conciliating disposition, and the courtly character of the noble earl, was received with general applause. Alexander replied. — “ My son, the
 “ manifold and great favors which the king of
 “ England has conferred on me, I well know,
 “ and they are stamped on my memory. To
 “ make a due return for these is my ardent wish,
 “ and I will do it on every occasion, as far as
 “ shall be consistent with my duties to God. But
 “ you have asked for legates, and you shall have
 “ them.” — For legates they had indeed asked, but intending that they should be sent into England, whither the primate also should return, and be there judged. The bishop of London therefore, having kissed the pontiff’s foot, requested to know, with what powers the legates would be sent? “ With proper powers,” answered Alexander. “ Yes;” observed the bishop, “ but we beg
 “ they may decide the cause without appeal.”
 “ That,” said the pope, “ is my glory, which

“ I will not give to another. And certainly,
 “ when the primate is judged, it shall be by
 “ ourselves. Reason does not allow that we remand
 “ him into England, there to be judged by his
 “ adversaries among his enemies.” He then
 proposed, that they should wait for the arrival
 of the archbishop, who would soon be at Sens.
 This they refused to do, alledging, that their
 master had fixed a day for their return. The
 ambassadors were disconcerted, and dropt some
 words about the schism, and the interest of the
 antipope; the cardinals were alarmed, and
 proposed more lenient measures; but Alexander
 remained inflexible. They retired therefore,
 without the pontiff’s blessing, and departed for
 England’.

BOOK

II.

1164.

The primate having staid, some days, at the
 abbey of St. Bertin, was advised to go to Soissons.
 Here he was visited by the French monarch,
 who promised him his protection, and offered
 him the free use of the royal treasury. The
 prelate thanked him, but refused, at this time,
 his gracious offer. He proceeded to Sens. The
 cardinals received him coolly; but Alexander
 admitted him to his presence, sympathized with
 all his feelings, and appointed a solemn audience
 for the next day. The next day the whole court
 assembled, and the primate thus opened his

Becket goes
 to Sens, and
 opens his de-
 fence.

‘ Vit. c. 9. Gerv. Dicet. an. 1164

B O O K

II.

1164.

defence.— “ Though I pretend to no superiority
 “ of understanding; yet, surely, I am not so
 “ weak, as, without cause, to have quitted Eng-
 “ land and its king. Had I been disposed to
 “ gratify his will in all things, my commands
 “ through his realm would have been cheerfully
 “ obeyed. Whilst, in that manner, I did serve
 “ him, in what did not success crown all my
 “ wishes? But when I adopted another conduct,
 “ mindful of my profession and of the duties I
 “ owed to God, then began to cool the affection
 “ he had ever shown me. Still, even now, were
 “ I willing to recede from my purpose, I should
 “ want no mediator to plead my cause. The
 “ church of Canterbury was once deemed the
 “ western sun; but its brightness is now obscured.
 “ Rather therefore I would suffer any torment and
 “ many deaths, than by dissembling, countenance
 “ the evils to which, in these days, she is exposed.
 “ Left you should imagine, I have wantonly,
 “ and from vain ostentation, engaged in this
 “ contest, yourselves shall judge.” So saying,
 he produced the copy of the *customs* he had
 received at Clarendon. “ Behold,” continued
 he, “ what the king of England has enacted
 “ against the liberty of the church! yourselves
 “ will tell me, whether with a safe conscience,
 “ these laws may be tolerated?!”

⁹ Vit. c. 10, 11. Gerv. ib.

The constitutions were read: when even they, who till now had opposed the archbishop, loudly praised his conduct; and the court came to an unanimous resolution, That, *in the person of the primate, the universal church should be succoured.* Alexander more than once perused the statutes: then turning, with great emotion, to Becket, he severely reprimanded him for having so weakly promised to obey them. He added: “ Though
 “ amongst these customs, which you have
 “ heard, there be none good, yet some there are
 “ which the church may tolerate. The others
 “ have been condemned by ancient councils,
 “ and are contrary to the holy canons.”— The court proceeded severally to examine the articles, noting what they *condemned*, and what they *tolerated*. The latter are but six: the 2, 6, 11, 13, 14, 16, as before stated.— Then addressing the primate, Alexander said: “ You weakly fell,
 “ indeed, but you rose again; have since suffered much; and before you left England,
 “ applied to me for the pardon of your transgression. Your repentance and the sacrifices
 “ you have made, merit indulgence. ”

On the following day, as the pope and cardinals were in a more private room, the archbishop entered, and thus accosted them. “ My
 “ fathers and lords: It is no where lawful to
 “ speak untruly, much less in the presence

BOOK II. 1164. “ of God and you. Wherefore I confess it
 “ freely, but with tears, that it is my own guilt
 “ which has brought these troubles on the English
 “ church. I ascended into the fold of Christ,
 “ not by the door, for it was not a canonical
 “ election which called me, but the terror of
 “ secular power which forced me in. Unwil-
 “ lingly, it is true, I accepted the charge, yet
 “ it was the will of man, and not of God,
 “ which induced me. What wonder then, if I
 “ have succeeded so ill. However, as my brethren
 “ urged me, had I surrendered my see, when
 “ the king threatened, how pernicious an ex-
 “ ample should I have left to the church. I
 “ deferred it to the present hour. And now,
 “ making the acknowledgment you have heard,
 “ and fearing for the event; sensible, likewise,
 “ how unequal my strength is to the burthen,
 “ lest the flock, by my means should perish,
 “ which it is my duty to feed, into your hands,
 “ holy father, I resign my see.” He took the
 ring from his finger, and gave it to the pontiff.
 The assembly was much moved.

A fair occasion was now offered for the termination of this unhappy controversy, and Alexander withdrew with the cardinals.— Were his resignation accepted, he might be provided with another see, and the king's anger being appeased, he would be more easily managed.

Such was the opinion of many. Others contended that, the example would prove fatal to the church, if he who had protected her liberties, and withstood every allurements, should be thus sacrificed. Rather, they said, he must be compelled to resume his charge, and we will support the champion who has fought our battles. The majority approved this opinion, and the primate was called; when Alexander told him, how much they were now convinced of his zeal for religion, and of the purity of his motives; that what fault there might have been in his promotion, was cancelled by its acknowledgment and by the resignation he had made; that he restored him to all his functions, which he might exercise with security; that practised as he had been in the school of adversity, they viewed him as a model for imitation, dear to God and men, dear to himself and to the Roman church; in a word, that as he had been his fellow-sufferer and his associate in persecution, he would never desert him, as long as God should give him life. “But as hitherto,” he concluded, “you have lived in affluence; and it is proper you should learn the lessons which poverty only can teach, I commend you to this holy person, (showing him the abbot of Pontigny who stood near,) that under his roof you may live in that simple form, which becomes an exile and the

B O O K "soldier of Christ. There, content with little,
 II. "pass the days which remain, till consolation
 1164. "come, and peace once more revisit us. In
 "the mean time, be firm, and oppose them
 "manfully who shall disturb the general con-
 "cord." He gave him his benediction; and
 the primate, soon afterwards, leaving Sens, with
 the abbot of Pontigny, retired with him to his
 convent, a house of the Cistercian order, situated
 on the confines of Burgundy. He put on the
 coarse habit of the order, and entered into the
 discipline of the monastic life⁸. It was about the
 beginning of December.

I have been minute in relating these transac-
 tions, because they lead to a long series of events,
 and because, besides that they are curious, they
 serve to develop the characters of men, with whom
 the reader must wish to be acquainted. — When
 the primate arrived in France, the prospect before
 him was uncertain; rather he had every reason
 to apprehend, that the power and influence
 of Henry would raise up new enemies against him,
 and cool the ardor of his friends. The benign
 countenance of the French king dissipated, in
 part, these alarms; but he knew the temper of
 the papal court, where his cause must be ultimate-
 ly decided. Was he sure that Alexander himself,

⁸ Vita c. 11, 12, 13. Gerv. ib.

in the crisis I have described, would risk so great a stake, when a temporary connivance, perhaps, might avert the evil? With a mind thus agitated, he opened his defence at Sens, and few orators, I think, have equalled him. He says nothing of the charges exhibited at Northampton, because they were of a civil nature, and as they principally regarded himself, might, he feared, excite but a cool interest in the breasts of his hearers. The statutes of Clarendon he brings forward. Well was he aware of their opposition to some favorite maxims of the Roman court. But on them even he does not pronounce: he refers the decision to their own judgment. At once all minds are with him, and his cause is pronounced to be their cause and the cause of God.

When we see how peremptorily, and without discussion even, the major part of those statutes are pronounced to be contrary to the evident discipline of the church, all surprise, surely, must cease, that our primate should so reluctantly have submitted to them. And if, after this submission, he repented, and sought for pardon, in what was he censurable? Ignorantly, or from motives of interest, or of policy, or of adulation, it was asserted, that they were the ancient customs of the realm. It could not be; nor was there any prescription in their favor. The temper of Lanfranc, (in the reign of the conqueror,) is well

B O O K
II.
1164.

BOOK known; but more than that, can it be imagined
II. that Anselm, firm as he was for the immunities
1164. of the church, would have given his sanction to
 these pretended customs? Yet from his time principally, the reign of Henry I, it is said, they claimed their origin. I touch not the spirit of the statutes, nor their rational tendency. The maxims of the twelfth century, in church as in state, are not to be estimated by such measures, as succeeding ages or ourselves have thought it expedient to adopt.

Becket having engaged the Roman court to condemn the customs of Clarendon, and to espouse the general quarrel, thought the moment favorable to a more personal inquiry. He knew how much it was his enemies wish to procure his deposition, and that every artifice would be used to effect it. Nothing could so radically obstruct their design, as a solemn confirmation of his election, by the pontiff and the Roman court. He resigns, therefore, the see of Canterbury into their hands, and does it in a manner to rouse their feelings, and to command their interest. In a moment of depression, some remorse might have arisen from the undue influence, which, he says, raised him to the see; but it will appear that, he did not always view it in so unfavorable a light. It might also be that, fatigued by troubles, and seeing no prospect of happier days, his mind

recoiled from the contest, and wished for repose. However this may have been, he was reinstated in all his honors, applause was given to his conduct, he was pronounced the champion of the church, and the pontiff, by a solemn promise, engaged to be his protector. — If the primate's mind, naturally inflexible, from this accumulation of incidents, became more firm; if, from this time, more than ever, he considered the cause as highly sacred, in which he was embarked; if a tincture of holy zeal or of enthusiasm, to which, before, he was perhaps a stranger, began to warm his thoughts, to invigorate his expressions, and to precipitate his actions, the effect was but natural, and should cause no surprise. The retirement of Pontigny would co-operate with the general impression.

BOOK
II.
1164.

The return of his ministers from their ineffectual embassy, but more than that, the news of the protection the primate had received from the French monarch, and from the papal court at Sens, blew into a flame the fiery soul of Henry. He confiscated the estates of the archbishop, and of those who had followed him, or had abetted his cause. To correspond with him, or to assist him in his exile, was declared to be criminal; and he forbade his name to be mentioned in the public prayers of the church. Nor was he yet satisfied. By a general proscription, all

Henry's re-
venge.

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BOOK his relations, friends, and dependents, without
II. distinction of sex or age, were exiled, to the number of nearly four hundred persons. Their lands also and goods were seized; and an oath was exacted from them, that they would go, without delay, to the archbishop, that he might be burthened with the charge of their maintenance, and suffer from the spectacle of their distress. — The exiles crowded to Pontigny, and its solitude was disturbed by their cries. Soon, however, a general compassion was raised. The pope used his interest; the king of France gave them his protection; Becket wrote letters to all his friends; and even as far as Sicily, an asylum was opened to the distressed*. — Wonderful, indeed, it was, that the king, in his anger, should so far have lost sight of the most obvious policy, as to adopt a measure, which could only exalt the primate's cause, and bring down infamy on his own. I say nothing of the cruelty of this indiscriminate proscription.

1165. A rupture was now apprehended between the
A conference kings of France and England. The countenance
projected. shown to Becket had much irritated the latter, and besides, Louis having married his other daughter by Eleanor, to his brother in law, the count of Blois, had invested him with the high

* Vita c. 14. Gerv. Hoveden. Neubrig.

office of seneschal, regardless of the rights of the earl of Anjou, to whom it belonged. Henry was earl of Anjou. Less provocations than these were, at that time, sufficient to kindle the flames of war, and to lay kingdoms waste: but, fortunately, such quarrels were as suddenly terminated, as they were precipitately begun. Matilda who, as has been said, resided constantly in Normandy, saw the rising storm, and wished to avert it. She sent a messenger to Alexander, requesting that he would mediate between her son and Louis, with an intimation that peace, she doubted not, might thus be restored to the English church. The pope accepted the christian office, and prevailed on the kings to meet at Gisors; but the interview was fruitless. Among other matters of discussion, they debated the affair of the primate. Henry insisted, that his submission should be absolute, and that Louis should no longer protect him. To this the latter would not consent: they parted therefore. — A conference was then proposed between Henry and the pope; to which the king agreed, provided Becket were not present. The archbishop, however, by letter, dissuaded his holiness from the interview, assuring him that, without an interpreter, skilled in the king's language, and acquainted, as himself was, with his character,

BOOK

II.

1163.

BOOK II. 1165. he would he circumvented by his subtilty. "Give
 " this answer to your king," then said Alexander
 to the messengers who waited, " that the Roman
 " church has never, at the command of princes,
 " refused her protection to any one, particularly
 " when exiled in the cause of justice. To succour
 " the oppressed, against the violence of their
 " enemies, however great and powerful, is a
 " privilege granted from above to the apostolic
 " see". The proud reply, which a fortunate
 turn in his circumstances seems to have dictated,
 put an end to the projected conference. Henry
 hastened back into England, whither affairs of
 moment called him; and Alexander prepared to
 return to Rome.

Alexander
 returns to
 Rome.

The Romans, sensible, at last, that the absence
 of their bishop with his court, was prejudicial
 to them; urged, besides, by the admonitions of
 the cardinal vicar, and by the sums of money
 he largely distributed; soon after the death of
 Octavian, had requested Alexander to return
 to the chair of St. Peter. He took the advice of
 his court, and of the kings who had protected
 him in their territories. The latter particularly,
 whose realms had felt the burthen of his presence,
 were of opinion, that he should instantly comply

¹⁰ Vit. c. 16. Joan. Sarisb. ep. 31. Dan. hist. de
 Fran. p. 320.

with the wishes of the Roman people. He left Sens, in the beginning of the month of April, immediately after the feast of easter, and passing slowly through the provinces to the south, by Paris, Bourges, Clermont, and Pui, came to Montpellier, which he left in the month of August, and embarked, with his court, at Maguelone. The elements, it is said, and the machinations of his enemies, obstructed his voyage; but he landed safe in the port of Messina. His friend and vassal, William of Sicily, received him with his wonted kindness, loaded him with presents, and ordering a red-painted galley to be prepared for his holiness, and four others for his attendants, he sent the archbishop of Reggio, with a train of his nobles, to escort him triumphantly to Rome. The Roman people came out to meet him, and he entered the city amidst the warmest congratulations of the senators, citizens, and clergy. But it was the 21st of November, after a journey of more than seven months¹¹.

BOOK

II.

1165.

In the month of May, Frederic had held a diet at Wurtzburgh in Franconia, where himself, the princes of the empire, and many of the German prelates, solemnly pledged themselves by oath, to support Pascal, and never to acknowledge Alexander. Ambassadors from Henry were

Henry suspected of inclining to the antipope, is cleared by Foliot.

¹¹ Acta Alex. an. 1165. Neubrig. c. 17.

BOOK at Wurtzburgh, Richard of Ivelcheſter, archdeacon
II. of Poitiers, and John of Oxford, a chaplain to
1165. the king. In a moment of irritation, Henry had
 propoſed, it ſeems, to ſend a more ſolemn embaffy.
 What inſtructions his meſſengers had received,
 or what they propoſed, in their maſter's name,
 to the diet, is uncertain. The emperor, indeed,
 in a circular letter, aſſerts, that they took the
 oath, juſt mentioned, and renounced all obedience
 to Alexander, for the king and the realm of
 England. But this is afterwards contradicted, on
 ſuch good authority, as to make it evident,
 either that the ambaffadors exceeded their com-
 miſſion, or that Henry was aſhamed of an order
 he had precipitately given, to frighten the pontiff
 into a weak compliance with his wiſhes¹².

Alexander, while on his journey, heard at
 Clermont of theſe tranſactions, and immediately
 wrote to the biſhop of London, the confidential
 friend and ſpiritual director of Henry. He
 complains that the king, by communicating with
 ſchiſmatics and men notoriously excommunicated,
 had abandoned the church, which he perſecuted
 in the perſon of the primate of Canterbury. He
 therefore orders Gilbert, that he join the biſhop
 of Hereford, (the learned Robert de Melun,) and
 that they both labor to reclaim Henry to

¹² Ep. S. Th. Ed. Brux. ep. 69, 70, 71, 72, 102.

his former veneration for the holy see, that he neither hinder appeals or journeys to Rome, and that he restore the archbishop¹³. It is dated the tenth of July.

BOOK

II.

1165.

Gilbert replied; That with his brother of Hereford, agreeably to the orders of his holiness, he had waited on the king, even when, at the head of his army, he was marching into Wales, and had laid his paternal remonstrances before him, in all their truth and strength of coloring. With many thanks, says he, he received your correction, and replied with great modesty to each article:—that his mind has never been turned from you; and that while you continued to behave as a father to him, he would make a filial return, and would humbly obey you, not forgetting, at the same time, what he owed to himself, and the dignity of his crown:—that if he has not shown you the same respect as formerly, the reason was; that, having aided you, as he had done, when you wanted his succour, you, in return, had hardly complied with a single petition he had made:—that still he remained immoveably fixed in his obedience to you; wherefore, that he will hinder no one from visiting the Roman court, nor hitherto, he says, has he ever done it.—With regard to appeals; That he considers it as an ancient privilege of his realm, that no clerk, in

¹³ Ep. 37.

BOOK a civil cause, shall go out of his kingdom, unless
 II. he shall have first endeavoured, by his authority,
 1165. to obtain legal justice, but that, when this has
 been done, he may freely appeal to you, nor
 will he oppose it. — That, though he knew the
 emperor was a schismatic, he had not, till now
 heard of his excommunication; that in his
 transactions, however, with him, he would abide
 by the judgment of the English church. — That
 he had not expelled the primate from his realm;
 and that he was free to return as he had freely
 departed, whenever it should please him, provided
 he were disposed to make him the satisfaction he
 had demanded, and to observe the royal customs
 to which he had sworn. — The bishop concludes
 by entreating his holiness to proceed with the
 greatest moderation; and he tells him that severity
 may drive the king and many of his people to
 withdraw from his obedience¹⁴. The king, he
 observes, may be softened by mildness, and be
 conquered by admonitions and patience.

About the same time, another letter, nearly in
 similar terms, was written to the cardinals by the
 king, or rather, by Foliot in the king's name. —
 The pope was pleased, and, in a second epistle,
 thanking the bishop for his services, he entreats
 him often to repeat his good advice to Henry,

¹⁴ Ep. 38.

and to take for his co-adjutors the archbishop of Rouen, the bishop of Hereford, and the empress Matilda; nor does he forget again to recommend to him the cause of the primate. He was then just embarking on the Mediterranean sea.

BOOK

II.

1165.

The archbishop of Rouen thus wrote to Henry, cardinal priest of St. Nereus: “ For our lord, “ the king of England, I can securely answer, “ that by himself, or by his messengers, he “ never swore or promised to the emperor, to “ adhere to the antipope, and to relinquish “ Alexander. And this I also know, that, in regard “ to the matrimonial treaty, to effect which the “ Germans labored much, Henry would make “ no concessions, but what should be consistent “ with his obedience to Alexander and the church. “ The empress, however, and myself, have strenuously insisted that he make all haste to remove “ this stigma from his honor.

The marriage, here spoken of, was between Matilda, the eldest daughter of the king, and Henry, surnamed the Lion, whom I have more than once mentioned, duke of Saxony and Bavaria; to whom, in the lustre of his family, and extent of his dominions, few kings were equal. But in personal endowments of mind and body, perhaps, he surpassed them all. An embassy waited on the king, at the head of which was the archbishop of Cologne, the favorite

BOOK of Frederic, and his principal minister. They
 II. were received with extraordinary honors, and
 1165. the duke's proposal was accepted. It is also said
 that an alliance was, at the same time, agreed
 on between the emperor and Henry. The earl of
 Leicester only, the grand justiciary, either because
 he disliked the match, or probably from a con-
 scientious motive, refused all communication with
 the ambassador, who was the chief abettor of the
 schism, and then excommunicated by Alexander.
 After his departure, the altars, on which he or
 his chaplains had officiated, were overturned by
 the people. So much was the nation attached to
 the cause of Alexander ¹⁵. — The princess, now
 an infant, was not conducted to her husband till
 three years afterwards.

War with the
 Welsh.

Impatient of further control, but pretending
 that the earl of Chepstow had assassinated his
 nephew, and forgetful of the fealty he had lately
 sworn to Henry, Rhees ap Gryffyth, king of
 South Wales, a fourth time drew the sword against
 his lord, and, by his spirited exertions, soon
 united into one grand confederacy all the princes
 of the land. Such unanimity, for many years,
 had not been seen. The powers of North Wales
 were commanded by Owen Gwyneth; those of
 the South by Rhees ap Gryffyth; and under the

¹⁵ Diceto an. 1165.

standard of Owen Cyveliock and the five sons of Madoc ap Meredyth, flood the men of Powisland. Henry had been apprized of the storm, but well aware how difficult it would be to stem its fury, he had taken time to collect a large army even from the distant provinces of his dominions. With this formidable host, he entered Wales, in the month of July. Hoping that the terror of his approach might break the confederacy, and induce some of the princes to join him, he encamped near Oswestry. But they remained all constant, all intrepid; in numbers little inferior to the king, and by the natural strength of the country decidedly his superiors. The two armies approached. Henry advanced to the river Ciereoc, and fearing some ambuscade, he ordered the woods to be cut down, which covered its banks. His vanguard, in which he had posted the flower of his army, was instantly attacked, and a bloody action ensued. But the English prevailed, and gaining the river, the king passed it, and again encamped at the foot of Berwin, one of the highest mountains in Wales. On the top of this mountain, and on its sides, as a lowering cloud, hung the Welsh army: Henry was soon sensible, how imprudently he had advanced; the enemy would not come to action; but they cut off his provisions, and flying parties harassed his troops whenever they attempted to move. A want of victuals and forage was soon

BOOK

II.

1165.

felt. In addition, violent and incessant rains fell for some days, which in torrents poured down into the vale, where the English lay. They were compelled to retire; and, in his retreat, Henry acted a scene of impotent cruelty, which would have disgraced a tyrant. The hostages he had received, at the last submission of the Welsh princes, were still with him: the eyes of these unfortunate youths he now ordered to be put out; and among them were two sons of Rhees ap Gryfflyth, and two of Owen Gwyneth.

Made sensible, at last, which experience should have sooner told him, that the Welsh could not be conquered by the mode of attack he had adopted, the English monarch resolved to revert to the plan of operations, which he had before practised with success. This was, to land his troops along the coast, and desolate the country. He marched to Chester, commanding his ships to be collected. But, in the midst of these preparations, suddenly he broke up his camp, and discharged his army, leaving his castles in Wales, and the neighbouring counties, exposed to the fury of an insulting and exasperated enemy. What were his fears, or what his motives, the historians of the age do not tell us; nor can it be at all conjectured, from any circumstances of the times. It should seem, as if he preferred the war of controversy with his primate, to the bold resistance

of ap Gryffyth and his hardy allies. But his reputation and interest suffered by the event : for the Welsh princes, separating their forces, marched against the different castles which belonged to the English, and some they demolished, and some they preserved. Wales was again independent¹⁶.

BOOK

II.

1165.

Henry soon experienced another mortification. Ambitious as he was of his own aggrandizement, and that of his family, his mind had long indulged the pleasing hope, that the united crowns of France and England might possibly descend to his children. His eldest son was married to the princess of France; and Louis was advanced in years, and had no male issue. But the airy dream now vanished. On the twenty-second of August was born Philip, surnamed Augustus, a prince sent by providence to exalt the French name, and to humble even Henry, in his latter days, and the house of Plantagenet. The joy of France, on the event, was unbounded.

The order of time, and the important contents, permit me to give the substance of a letter, which the bishop of Lisieux, with whom the reader is acquainted, a prelate well versed in the politics of the court of England, wrote to Becket. He, whom the controversy interests, will pardon the abrupt insertion. — “Men,” says he, “who

The bishop of
Lisieux writes
to Becket.

¹⁶ Welsh Chron. an. 1165. Neubrig. c. 18. Gerv.

B O O K " pretend to fathom the intention, did once
 II. " believe that you were actuated by ambition,
 1165. " and that your object was to extend your own
 " power, and to vie with majesty: that, there-
 " fore, you had resisted your sovereign's com-
 " mands, hoping that others might be awed by
 " your example. It was reported, that you had
 " said among your friends, that his inconsiderate
 " youth was not to be flattered, but to be
 " vigorously repressed: that you were best ac-
 " quainted with his dispositions, and that he was
 " conscious how necessary you were to him.
 " These reflections were repeated to his majesty;
 " when he angrily observed, that as his dignity
 " was at stake, he must exert all his power and
 " address; for that you were not a man to recede
 " from your purposes.—But every doubt, which
 " was on our minds, is now dissipated, and the
 " purity of your motives is become so evident,
 " that honest men are rejoiced, and your enemies
 " are confounded. Justice and the liberty of the
 " church you preferred to every earthly emolu-
 " ment; for had you consented to these *new abuses*,
 " not only might you have lived in peace; you
 " might have reigned with your prince. Yet even
 " in the cause you supported, you would have
 " proved invincible, had not they deserted you,
 " whose duty it was to have remained firm. Their
 " weakness gave courage to your adversaries. You

“ even exposed your life: but it seems that there
 “ the king was indulgent, and had not lost all
 “ affection for you. He strove to intimidate
 “ you into compliance. He could have hindered
 “ your escape from England; and remaining
 “ there, nor would you have had so much
 “ power against him, nor would his enemies
 “ have had occasion to revile him.

“ Often consider what your cause is; who is
 “ your opponent; and who are your protectors.
 “ Your cause is manifestly just, since you contend
 “ for the liberty of the church, which cannot
 “ be attacked without interesting our faith.—But
 “ you have an opponent, who causes distant
 “ nations to tremble by his policy, his neigh-
 “ bours by his power, and his subjects by his
 “ severity: whom prosperity has rendered so
 “ irritable, that a common failure in politeness
 “ he deems an insult. By submission, indeed,
 “ and patient forbearance, he may, sometimes,
 “ be managed; but he will not brook the least
 “ constraint, that his own will may seem to be
 “ his only guide. So much does he look for
 “ praise, as even to be charmed by flattery.
 “ —This it was that drew your suffragans so
 “ basely from you. Rely not, therefore, on
 “ them, for having caused the division; they
 “ are not instruments to effect a reconciliation.
 “ —The inferior clergy, for the most part,

BOOK II. 1165. “ love you much ; but the fear of banishment
 “ withholds them ; and they are contented to
 “ sigh , and in secret to express their wishes for
 “ your safety. — As to the nobility , it is well
 “ known , that they have formed , as it were ,
 “ a conspiracy against the church , in all things
 “ to oppose her honor and advantage. At their
 “ expense , they are persuaded , she acquires
 “ wealth and dignity. When an occasion , they
 “ deem favorable , offers , then appears their
 “ ardor ; while they pretend , it is the interest
 “ of the state only , which they contend for.
 “ They say ; the king should not govern with
 “ less dignity than his predecessors , who were
 “ less powerful than he ; and every attempt
 “ they made , however contrary to religion and
 “ reason , these men pretend was a part of the
 “ royal prerogative. By flattery they prevail on
 “ him to engage in contests , hoping in fact ,
 “ that his power may be weakened in the
 “ quarrel ; and that themselves shall recover their
 “ lost privilege of transgressing the laws with
 “ impunity.

“ When you consider the assistance you may
 “ draw from strangers , with me you must
 “ allow , that their first offers are gracious and
 “ abundant ; but that the warmth of their friendship
 “ soon cools. Great moderation , therefore , and
 “ abstemiousness , are necessary. — Lose not courage

“ from the view of a probable continuation of
 “ adverse fortune; nor let a consciousness of the
 “ equity of your cause, give obstinacy to your
 “ resolution. What is not criminal, and really
 “ dangerous to religion, that bear with. When
 “ you cannot correct, dissemble for a time.
 “ Things do not always remain in the same state;
 “ and God, as he pleases, turns the hearts of
 “ kings. Should a favorable occasion offer,
 “ receive it with open arms: and if an accom-
 “ modation be proposed, discuss not its terms
 “ too nicely, lest it generate altercation. Rest on
 “ general conditions; and be satisfied, if nothing
 “ be expressly mentioned, which may affect the
 “ liberty of the church. Look not for triumph in
 “ the eyes of men: on the contrary, permit his
 “ majesty to enjoy the honor of victory, provided
 “ your own conscience give you praise before
 “ God.

“ As to myself, be persuaded, I will serve you
 “ faithfully and as a friend; for I know that you
 “ sacrifice your fortune and your person for us.
 “ But it will be necessary that, outwardly I
 “ appear your enemy. If thought your friend,
 “ I should neither be believed nor be attended
 “ to. By counterfeiting I shall serve you more
 “ effectually. Do not lose courage. The king is
 “ soon to return into Normandy, when your
 “ friends will be better able to manage your

BOOK II. 1165. " concerns with him: They say, he is become
 " more tractable; owing to some apprehensions
 " he entertains of the French monarch and of his
 " subjects here. Nor is he indifferent to the
 " indignation of the pontiff, whom his conduct
 " has irritated. In England, so disturbed, by
 " your absence, is the state of government, that
 " neither civil concerns, nor those of the church,
 " are duly administered. The whole order of
 " things is confounded. Farewel; and if you
 " mention the contents of this letter, take care
 " to conceal my name".

The good sense of this epistle, the advice it conveys to the primate, the view it exhibits of the king's dispositions and of the general state of parties, and its uncommon perspicuity of ideas and precision of language, are admirable. The cause of Becket, when thus delineated by one who knew it well, and who was attached to Henry, will cease I trust, to present those odious features, with which it is generally portrayed. The original, which I have greatly abridged, in every view is an excellent composition.

Heretics
punished.

Nor can I omit another event.—Certain German heretics were examined before a synod at Oxford, which had been convened for the purpose. They were of the sect of those, who in the south of

" Ep. 85.

France,

France, soon acquired the name of *Albigenses*, and had come into England, about thirty in number, men and women, to disseminate their doctrines. At their head was one Gerard, whom they regarded as their master, a man of some learning; whereas his disciples were illiterate and simple rustics. One profelyte they had made, a female, though they had been some years in the country, when they were apprehended and cast into prison. The king would not release them, nor punish them, unexamined; but convoked a synod. Before it the Germans were brought, and being asked, what their belief was? Gerard, in the name of the rest, answered; "that they were christians, and venerated the doctrine of the apostles." They were then examined particular, on the several articles of faith; when, by their answers it appeared, that they rejected baptism, the eucharist, and marriage. Regarding the person of Christ, their belief was orthodox. Being pressed with texts of scripture, they said, "that they believed as they were taught; but would not dispute about their faith." Admonished to repent, they despised the counsel; and when menaced with punishment, they smiled, and replied: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." The bishops, therefore, condemned them as heretics, and

B O O K
II.
1166. delivered them to the king to be punished. He commanded them to be branded on the forehead with a hot iron, to be publicly whipt, and be expelled from the town; and he forbade his subjects to receive them into their houses, or to give them any relief. They submitted to their sentence with wonderful alacrity; and Gerard received an additional stigma on the chin. Their cloths being then torn off to the waist, the remaining part of the sentence was cruelly executed. It was winter, and no one giving them the least assistance, they all perished miserably. Our countrywoman, by a timely recantation, escaped the threatened punishment. These, says the historian, were the first sectaries, who, since the expulsion of the Britons, had come into England; and the *pious rigor*, he thinks, would prove a bar to the ingress of others¹¹. At that time to become a reformer, demanded the spirit of a hero or of a madman.

The primate
appointed le-
gate, writes
to the king.

Alexander, soon after his return to Rome, mindful of the champion he had left at Pontigny, appointed him his legate in England, thus investing him with all the powers, which belonged to his immediate representative. Only the diocese of York was exempted from his jurisdiction. The notification of this appointment was immediately sent to the bishop of London,

¹¹ Neubrig. c. 13.

by the primate, and with it letters from himself, addressed to many of his suffragans. The packet, while Gilbert, was at the altar, was put into his hands by a stranger. Alarmed at the contents, he wrote to the king, expressing the anxiety of his mind. "But when the pope commands," says he, "no appeal can avail; nor is there any remedy: we must obey. We are commanded to submit to his legate; to oblige those to restitution, who, by your order, have received the revenues of his clergy, absent with him; and to collect the peter-pence which is due to his holiness. We throw ourselves at your feet, requesting we may be permitted to obey these orders. But I advise, should the primate's letters be found to contain any thing contrary to the customs of the realm, that your majesty command the bishops instantly to appeal to the pope, or to the legates he shall appoint".

The primate's life in his convent is warmly delineated by his historians. The day he spent in prayer, in the study of the scriptures, and in the religious exercises of the monastic life. With reluctance did he cease from these occupations, and close his eyes to rest. But when the business of the field called the monks to labor, he also went out with them, and he helped to make

¹⁹ Ep. 131.

BOOK II. 1166. their hay, and to reap their corn. His health declined much. The study of ecclesiastical polity was a favorite pursuit with him; and he spent much time in examining the laws and canons of the church²⁰. In them he had been initiated at Bologna; but the disputes he was engaged in, now re-animated his ardor. Unfortunately, the research would but confirm his first ideas, and open higher views of the rights and immunities, for which he had deemed it his duty to contend. There was then no clue to lead to the detection of the spurious canons, which were every where circulated, and every where obeyed; how then was our primate to escape from the mazy labyrinth? His friend, however, and secretary, John of Salisbury, strongly dissuaded him from the study, aware, from the dispositions and circumstances of his master, of its obvious effect. The primate, roused by reflection, convinced daily more how unjustly he was persecuted, solicited by his friends in exile, elated by the protection of the French king, but more by that of the pontiff, and sensible that the legatine powers were not given to remain idle, began to conclude, as well from character as from conscience, that his own and the church's cause should be more actively supported. He resolved to write to the king.

²⁰ Ep. 31. Gerv. an. 1166.

He wrote an *admonitory* letter, in terms gentle and unassuming, wherein he represents that his duty can no longer permit him to be silent, and exhorts the king to restore to the English church the liberty he had taken from her. The letter was sent by an abbot of the Cistercian order, who returned with a verbal reply, harsh and reproachful²¹. — He wrote a second letter, *commonitory* as the first; but more full, scholastic, and pointed. He expresses an earnest desire of seeing the king: he specifies what are his own duties to him, as to his lord, his king, and his son: he tells him that he is a king by the grace of God, to improve his own character for the edification of others, and to reward and punish, by the power he received from the church at his coronation, and by the sword he bears to crush her enemies. The church, he observes, is composed of two orders, the clergy and the people; that to the first belongs the general administration of all ecclesiastical and spiritual concerns, and to the second, which comprises kings, barons, and their officers, civil and secular affairs, to the end that all things may tend to the peace and unity of the church. He repeats it as a certain truth, that kings derive their power from the church; and therefore, when by his customs of

²¹ Ep. 63. Gerv.

BOOK II. 1166. Clarendon he prescribed certain duties to the bishops, that he transgressed the obvious order of things. He puts him in mind of his coronation-oath, whereby he engaged to protect the liberty of the church. He entreats him to reinstate the church of Canterbury in her former condition and dignity; to restore all her possessions, her castles, manors, farms, his own property and that of his friends, all which he had seized and distributed; and to allow him to return to his see, freely and peaceably: "Then, said he, "I am ready to serve you, as my dearest lord "and king, with fidelity and attachment, in all "things I may be able, saving the honor of "God, of the Roman church, and of my own "order; otherwise be assured, that you will "experience the severity of heaven and its "vengeance". " — The reader will not be surprised that the monks who bore this letter, were treated with some asperity: but the subject is curious, as it distinctly marks the leading maxims of the church, which then prevailed, and the terms, on which the primate seemed to think, a conciliation only could be effected.

Henry goes
into France.

That Henry was abroad at the beginning of this correspondence, does not appear; but we are told that he quitted England towards the end of

²² Ep. 64.

winter. The queen had been left regent in Maine and Aquitaine, and some of the barons had disobeyed her commands. These he punished. An affair of great moment then called him into Bretagne. — The duke Conan, long harassed by his turbulent nobility, and unable to resist a powerful confederacy formed against him, had recourse to Henry, who, as earl of Nantes, already had some interest in the province. Conan had an only daughter, Constantia, heiress to all his possessions. It was proposed that she should marry Geoffry, the king's third son. No proposal could be more alluring; and Henry instantly marched with the troops he had with him; laid waste the lands of the rebellious barons; demolished their castles; and soon reduced them to sue for peace. The grateful Conan then, not only surrendered his daughter into his hands, but with her the whole dutchy of Bretagne, which he was to administer till Geoffry should be capable of governing, reserving only to himself the earldom of Guingamp. To this the Bretons themselves readily consented; and Henry, in his son's name, taking possession of the province, received the homage of his new vassals. It was to his own power a vast acquisition, and the Bretons had reason to rejoice in the change. A desolated country, and an unhappy tenantry, soon recovered from the oppression of their lawless barons,

BOOK

II.

1166.

BOOK II. while the strong arm of Henry gave inhabitants
 1166. to the towns and villages, and culture to the
 plains. They are the words of the historian²¹.

News being brought into Europe of the distressed situation of the christians in Palestine, Louis, with the advice of his council, laid a tax on all the effects of his subjects, to be levied for five years, and strongly exhorted Henry to imitate his example. He took his advice, and summoned a meeting of his vassals at Mans. They agreed to the regulation; and a statute was made, whereby each person, on all his possessions, was to pay two pence in the pound, for the first year, and a penny for the four years ensuing. The regulation affected all orders of men, from the highest prelate and baron, to the lowest peasant. The king first swore to observe the statute, and then the archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, knights, and vassals, engaging themselves that all under their power should swear the same. He who failed in the payment, incurred excommunication; but a third part of the penance, due to sinners, would be remitted to him, who faithfully complied. Measures were immediately taken, to extend the same regulation to England. But when the first remittance was to be made to Palestine, the pious monarchs quarrelled about

²¹ Neubrig. c. 18. Chron. Norm. Diceto

the form of doing it; and their own subjects narrowly escaped the horrors of a destructive war ²⁴!

BOOK
II.
1166.

The primate's last letter had left an impression on the mind of Henry, which public report had strengthened, and he was alarmed lest it might be followed by a sentence of interdict on his territories, and excommunication on himself. He ordered his barons and confidential friends to meet him at Chinon in Touraine; when he earnestly requested their counsel, and complained of Becket, who, (and he said it with tears,) "tore his body and soul from him." "But you are all traitors," exclaimed he, "who will take no pains to free me from the annoyance of that man." — The hasty charge roused the archbishop of Rouen, who gently checked its intemperance. But the artful and politic Arnulph of Lisieux advised, as the only measure which could avert the impending sentence, that the king should interpose an *appeal*, in his own name, to the pope. He assented. And thus, says the historian, while Henry, by his *ancient customs*, wished to suppress the right of appeal, himself, in his own defence, had recourse to it ²⁵. — The

Appeals to
Rome.

²⁴ Gerv. Diceto an. 1166. Chron. Norm. ib.

²⁵ Joan. Sarisb. ep. 140.

BOOK II.
1166. bishops of Seez and Lisieux were instantly dispatched to notify this appeal to the primate: but he, a few days before, had left Pontigny, when they returned to the king.

The primate
pronounces
his censures.

His apprehensions were well founded. Becket had determined to excommunicate him and his abettors. — In Soissons were some churches of great repute, but one, in particular, dedicated to St. Draufinus, the patron of combatants. To this place many champions, even from distant countries, resorted; for it was believed, that the protection of the saint could render them invincible. At the eve of a spiritual combat, the primate, therefore, repaired to Soissons; and there he was, when the king's messengers did not find him at Pontigny. Three nights, in the true spirit of chivalry, did he watch before the altars of the saints, and then returned, full of holy ardor, and armed for battle. It was in the church of Vezelay, not far from his convent, on whitfunday, that he meant to pronounce the sentence: but two days before, a messenger from the French king informed him, that Henry was dangerously ill. The awful ceremony, in his regard, it was thought proper to defer.

On the morning of the festival, fame had drawn together a great concourse of people. The archbishop ascended the pulpit, and preached. At the close, a solemn pause ensued; when the

torches were extinguished ; — the bells tolled ; — the crosses were inverted ; and he pronounced his anathemas. He excommunicated John of Oxford, for his behaviour in the diet of Wurtzburgh, for having associated with schismatics, and for intrusion into the deanry of Salisbury. He excommunicated Richard, the archdeacon of Poitiers, for a similar communion with schismatics, and for machinations against the church. He excommunicated Hugh de St. Clare, Thomas Fitz-Bernard, and Ranulph de Broc, for having seized the possessions of the church of Canterbury, and all those who hereafter should dare to lay their hands on her possessions. He excommunicated Richard de Lucy, and Joceline de Baliol, as the favorers of the king's tyranny, and the contrivers of those heretical pravities, the customs of Clarendon. The customs he then read, and condemned, particularly six of them ; he annulled the statute whereby they were enacted, he excommunicated all persons whatsoever who should abet, observe, or enforce them, and he absolved the bishops from the oath they had taken. He named the king ; mentioned the letters he had written, and the messengers he had sent to him ; and he now publicly called on him to repent, and to make satisfaction for the injuries he had done to the church ; or that speedily the sentence, they had heard pronounced,

B O O K

II.

1166.

BOOK should fall on his head²⁶. — Thus ended this
 II. astonishing scene.

1166. The effects of these censures were, in many circumstances, seriously alarming, as they reached to the concerns of civil life. Not only was an excommunicated man shut out from all the offices and benefits of religion; but he became an alien in society. Intercourse ceased; his friends turned their backs; and to bid him God speed! was to partake of his guilt, and incur his punishment. Therefore did crowned heads fear it most, unless their power and influence were able to avert its effects. For they also, under this anathema, were not approached by their servants, consulted by their ministers, or obeyed by their subjects. Besides, it was often accompanied by a sentence of deposition; and when this was not the case, still much disorder was the obvious consequence. The disaffected and ill-disposed availed themselves of the circumstance, to practise their designs with impunity, and to foment rebellion. The neighbouring princes also, did not neglect the favorable opportunity, whether of retaliation, or of conquest, while the allegiance of the subjects stood thus suspended. We now see why Henry was so much alarmed, as even to recur to the humiliating

²⁶ Joan. Sarisb. ib. Gerv. Dicet.

expedient of an appeal to Rome. His possessions on the French continent were numerous, and the allegiance of the inhabitants could be easily shaken, particularly as Louis, their suzerain or supreme lord, was at hand, to whom many of the great barons were attached, and who would encourage their disaffection, and protect their arms. That he urged the primate, from motives of ambition or revenge, to excommunicate Henry, we may presume; at least we know, from the circumstance of his having informed him of the king's illness, that he was no stranger to his design.

Having gone so far, the primate was not of a temper to relax from his purpose. He returned in haste to Pontigny, and wrote to his suffragans in England, and to Alexander, informing them of what he had done. From the latter he hopes to receive a solemn confirmation of his measures; and he orders the bishops to attend to the execution of the censures he had pronounced.

Who doubts," says he to them, "that the
 "priests of Christ are the fathers and masters of
 "kings, and princes, and of all the faithful?"
 — So far was the humility of the gospel, and the lowly spirit of its founder, absorbed in the pride of spurious canons and the wild maxims of the

²⁷ Ep. 138, 96.

BOOK II. 1166. age! But they were the maxims of the age, and a man of unaffected probity might then maintain them.

The English bishops appeal, and address the primate.

Nor was the king, on his side, idle. He sent orders into England, that all communication, under the severest penalties, cease with the archbishop; that the ports be diligently watched; and that the prelates of his realm immediately renew their appeal to Rome²⁸. They assembled at London, and with them many abbots, and inferior persons; when it was resolved, in the form of a remonstrance, to appeal to the pontiff, and to signify the same by letter to the primate. The bishops of Exeter and Rochester refused to sign it; and Henry of Winchester excused himself, saying; “that he was summoned by the “sovereign bishop, (meaning his maker,) and “that he would not appeal.”—The remonstrance to Alexander is artful and imposing. “It must “be within your holiness’s recollection,” say “they, that, now some time ago, you admonished our king to correct some abuses in his “realm, which displeased you. With respect “he received your injunctions, declaring that, “agreeably to the judgment of his church, he “was ready to reform all disorders; for, indeed, “orthodox as he is in faith, *true to his marriage-*

²⁸ Gerv. ut sup.

“ vows, and strenuous in the cause of justice,
“ he has no wishes but what tend to the ex-
“ tirpation of scandals, and to the establishment
“ of general concord. He knew that the peace
“ of his realm was sometimes disturbed by the
“ enormous excesses of churchmen. Not to
“ infringe their privileges, he reported these
“ crimes to the bishops, their ecclesiastical judges.
“ They punished them conformably to their
“ canons. But this punishment of degradation,
“ the king deemed inadequate to the offence,
“ (homicide for instance,) and insufficient for
“ the public security. Hence, between the
“ clergy and his majesty, arose a *holy strife*, from
“ the pure intention of both parties, excusable,
“ we hope, before God: the one contending
“ for the arrangement *divinely established*, and the
“ other zealous to repress sin, and to extend
“ the blessings of peace. His majesty was there-
“ fore desirous to collect the ancient customs,
“ which had been observed by the clergy, in
“ the reigns of his predecessors, and to make
“ them public, that all contention might cease.
“ This was done. The most ancient among
“ the bishops and the nobles of the land, on
“ oath, produced these customs, and they were
“ published. And this is now, far and near,
“ proclaimed to be the king's cruelty against the
“ church of God; this is called his persecution,

BOOK " and the malevolence of his works. — But,
 II. " should those customs contain any thing, dan-
 1166. " gerous to conscience, or dishonorable to the
 " church, he has long ago, in obedience to you,
 " promised to correct it by the judgment of his
 " own church. The peace we wish for, holy
 " father, we had, before this time, obtained,
 " had not the provocation of our lord of
 " Canterbury roused anew the king's anger,
 " which was stilled, and nearly extinguished.
 " From him we hoped for concord and the
 " recovery of lost favor. Instead of admonitions
 " and gentle words, whereby he might have
 " overcome, harshly and irreverently he has
 " assailed him in furious letters, which breathe
 " nor the benevolence of a father, nor the
 " patience of a bishop. He threatened him with
 " excommunication and his realm with an in-
 " terdict. Nor did he stop there. The king's
 " special friends, the first noblemen of the realm,
 " his confidential ministers, in whose hands are
 " his own and the public concerns, he has
 " excommunicated, not cited before him, not
 " conscious of any crime, not convicted of any,
 " not permitted to make their defence. Even
 " lately he suspended the bishop of Salisbury,
 " without any judicial process, or our partici-
 " pation. Of such proceedings what must be the
 " event? Either that the concord between the
 kingdom

“ kingdom and the priesthood shall be broken,
 “ and we, with our clergy, be exiled; or, which
 “ heaven avert! that we renounce obedience to
 “ you, and join the schism. To avoid so great
 “ evils, we have appealed to your holiness against
 “ any ordinances of the archbishop, which may
 “ affect the king, the realm, us, or our churches;
 “ and we have named the feast of the Ascension
 “ next, for the term to our appeal. Rather we
 “ submit to be humbled under your injunctions,
 “ whatever they may be, than, from day to day,
 “ without any cause, to be tortured by the passion
 “ of our haughty primate ”.

BOOK
 II.
 1166.

How far the first part of this remonstrance
 accords with the truth of history, as before
 related, the reader must be competent to judge.
 It was little calculated to impose on the pontiff,
 who had himself seen, and formally condemned
 the constitutions of Clarendon. The remainder is
 all penned in the strong spirit of enmity to the
 primate. We had not before heard of the
 suspension of the bishop of Salisbury, but it was
 for having admitted John of Oxford to the
 deanry of his church²⁹.

Their address to the primate is in a similar
 style, the substance of which is: That they had
 hoped, by humility and prudence, he would

²⁹ Ep. 128.

³⁰ Ep. 127.

BOOK have repaired the disorders which his sudden
 II. retreat had occasioned, and that the news they
 1166. had heard of his way of life, in retirement, had
 given them comfort: that the fruits of such
 behaviour would have been, indeed, salutary:
 but that now, his late attack on the king had
 reached their ears, which must for ever banish
 peace, and generate contention. They desire
 him to reflect on the end he has in view, and to
 consider, whether the means he has adopted can
 lead him to it. They counsel him as their
 father, not to create new difficulties, but, ceasing
 from threats, to try the effects of patience and
 humility. "It would have been better," they tell
 him, "to have aimed at praise by the poverty, he
 " had voluntarily embraced, than to have incurred
 " the general censure of ingratitude. The world
 " cannot forget, how kind the king was to you,
 " to what glory he raised you from a low condi-
 " tion, and took you so near to his heart, that, from
 " the northern ocean to the Pyrenean Hills, his
 " wide dominions were subject to you. They only
 " were deemed happy, who found favor in your
 " sight. And because earthly honors are liable to
 " fade, he would fix you in the immediate concerns
 " of God. His mother dissuaded, the nation
 " loudly objected, the church, as far as might
 " be, sighed and groaned, but he left no means
 " untried to effect your exaltation, hoping that

" his reign would become more prosperous, and
 " that by your aid and counsel nothing would
 " disturb his repose. Have some concern then
 " for your own fame, and by submission and
 " kindness strive to conquer."

B O O K

II.

1166.

If their admonitions have no effect, they hope, that the interest of the church and of the pontiff may move him. For what; if, provoked by him, the king, whom so many nations obey, should withdraw his obedience? He has been solicited, they say, by gifts and promises; but has stood firm on the rock, spurning, with a great soul, all that the world could offer. They fear that resentment may alone be able to overcome him; and should he be the occasion, torrents must ever flow from his eyes. But his wise counsellors, perhaps, exhort him to use his power against the king and his subjects. That power, they observe, is formidable to obstinate sinners, which his majesty, they pronounce, is not, though he may have often fallen. He consults, they say, the good of his people, and the peace of the church; and therefore he requires, that the respect which was shown to his predecessors be shown to himself; that he had promised to refer the matter in litigation to the judgment of his church; and for what then had he merited ecclesiastical censures? They entreat, that he will proceed with caution, and with paternal

B O O K gentleness; they mention, with indignation, the
II. suspension of the bishop of Salisbury; and they
1166. announce their appeal to Rome³¹.

**The primate
 answers.**

The primate answered in a long and labored, but a full and justificatory, address, which to give entire is unnecessary, and to abridge is difficult. — Unexpectedly, he says, he had received their epistle, which, he cannot persuade himself, was written with their general approbation: that it contained more of satire than of consolation; and, he thinks, was dictated rather by command, than suggested by views of charity. He reproaches them with their little zeal for the liberty of the church, and for their own real interest. They turned their backs in the day of battle, and he had waited till God perhaps might have inspired them with better courage: may he take the veil from their hearts, that they may know their duty! If since the day of his promotion, he had injured any one of them, let him speak: he would make him ample reparation. But if not; why had they thus deserted him? He exhorts them to repent, to rejoin the banners of the church, and with him stoutly to oppose her enemies. — He justifies his flight from England, which, after the injustice and violence their own eyes had beheld at North-

³¹ Apud Hoved. ep. 126.

ampton, was become necessary, in order to secure his own life, and to pursue his appeal; had not his retreat been *sudden*, as they call it, it would have been impeded. “But if it “*occasioned any disorders*,” he remarks, “his “be the blame, who caused it. I presented “myself in the court of his holiness; I laid before “him the injuries which myself and the church “had suffered; I explained the motive of my “appeal, and of my journey: but no one “appeared to answer me, or to urge any thing “against me. Soon, however, my servants were “forbidden to obey me in their temporal “concerns, or to send me any supplies, without “an order from the king, by the sentence, seems, “of my lords of York and London. Without “judgment pronounced against me, without “cause, to the prejudice of my appeal, the “church of Canterbury, my friends, myself, “were despoiled; clergy, laics, men with their “wives, women with their children, were indiscriminately proscribed. The effects of the “church were confiscated to the royal treasury: “one part of the money was applied to the “king’s use, and the other to yours, if I have “heard rightly, my brother of London, and to “that of your church. If so, I order you to “restore it within forty days. On what grounds “are these usurpations justified? Is it, perhaps,

BOOK

II.

1166.

“ under the pretext of an appeal? See to what
 “ you expose yourselves and your churches, if
 “ they who invade their rights be permitted
 “ thus to cover their enormities.” — He advises
 them to take care how they lead others into
 error, by allowing a prerogative to princes,
 which is not theirs, and by confounding the
 distinct rights of church and state: and he
 admonishes them not to hold truth from the
 king, lest he perish in his evil doings. He that
 has authority to dissemble, he says, may do it;
 for his part, he will not incur the guilt.

“ You declare, that, at my promotion, the
 “ nation *loudly objected*, and that the *church*
 “ *groaned*. And do you know then what should
 “ be the truthful character of the words of a
 “ priest? Good God! surely the meanest peasant
 “ would blush to say it. Ask your own con-
 “ sciences; recollect the manner of my election,
 “ the consent of all whom it regarded, the assent
 “ of the king signified by his son and by his
 “ messengers, and of the prince himself with
 “ all the nobles of the realm. If any one of them
 “ contradicted it, if he opposed it in any thing,
 “ let him speak who knows it, who is conscious
 “ of it. If any particular man, indeed, was in
 “ his own heart troubled, let him not therefore
 “ say, that an injury was done to the kingdom
 “ and to the church. As to yourselves: consider

“ the letters which, with the king, you all sent **BOOK**
 “ to the pope, earnestly requesting the *pallium* **II.**
 “ (the archiepiscopal mantle) for me, which **1166.**
 “ was granted. This is the truth.”—His majesty,”
 you say, “ raised me to eminence *from a low*
 “ *condition*. Indeed, I did not spring from royal
 “ ancestors: but I would rather be he, whom
 “ greatness of soul shall ennoble, than who
 “ degenerates from the blood of his fathers. Say
 “ I was born in a poor cottage: yet, by the
 “ kindness of heaven, in my low condition,
 “ before I entered into the king’s service, I lived
 “ among my neighbours of every description,
 “ as you well know, in sufficient affluence and
 “ with honor. David was but a shepherd’s boy,
 “ and Peter, called from his nets, was raised to
 “ the primacy in the church of Christ. By his
 “ blood he acquired a crown in heaven, and
 “ his name is glorious upon earth. We are the
 “ successors of Peter, and not of Cesar. With
 “ what views the king sought my promotion,
 “ God best knows. His own heart can tell him:
 “ but what his duties are, I, as my office directs
 “ me, will lay before him, with some severity,
 “ but more sincerely than they, who flatter him
 “ with lies. The blows of a friend are preferable
 “ to the treacherous kisses of an enemy. You
 “ charge me with ingratitude. It is the motive
 “ which constitutes the crime. I know what I

BOOK II. 1166. " owe to the king, as his vassal and his subject;
 " and if I have endeavoured to turn him from
 " his evil ways, I have rather merited his thanks,
 " than deserved to be called ungrateful. At all
 " events, I more fear to be ungrateful to him, who
 " is the master of us all, and who threatens those
 " with his indignation, who misuse the powers
 " with which he has intrusted them. "

As to their insinuation, that his conduct might impel the king to join the schism: he trusts, that no temporal motive can draw him from his allegiance to the church; that in him it would be more criminal, as it would involve many in his guilt. The thought would be entertained by no one, much less by a bishop: let themselves be aware therefore lest their words infuse poison into others, and their own designs be manifested. — The church, they need not fear, will gain strength from oppression: they may tremble, who seek her ruin. — In the suspension of the bishop of Salisbury, no judicial process was requisite, because his crime was notorious. Such is the established order. He admitted John of Oxford to the deanry of his church, after a solemn prohibition from himself and the pope.

Their appeal, he then tells them, is nugatory, because, in their own regard, they have no cause to fear; but if they think thereby to suspend his lawful authority, should an occasion

be given, such as that he just mentioned, it must be deemed subversive of all canonical right. "God forbid," says he, "that I should attempt any thing inordinate against my king or his kingdom, against you and your churches." — If it be in the king's name they appealed; what interest can they have to impede the course of justice, when the liberty of the church is at stake, and the vindication of its rights against rapine and oppression? He remarks, how irregular all their proceedings had been, when, after their mutual appeal at Northampton, which should have suspended every prosecution, himself and his friends had been despoiled, and lately an edict published denouncing prison or mutilation against all, who should entertain his messengers, or receive his instructions. Some of them, he says, he has reason to suspect, if not all: they are not therefore qualified to judge between him and the king.

He concludes: "May my king listen to the request of his servant, to the counsel of his bishop, to the exhortation of his father, that God may bless him, and prolong his days, and the years of his children unto many ages! Under him, as a king most christian, may the church enjoy peace and liberty: may the Roman see exercise that right within his realm, which belongs to her, and she has in other

BOOK
II.
1166.

BOOK II. 1166. “ kingdoms! To the church of Canterbury and
 “ to me let him restore our privileges, with
 “ peace and security, and the possessions we
 “ have lost. Then, under him, I will serve
 “ my God without fear; and as he wills, so he
 “ shall use my services, saving the honor of God,
 “ and of the Roman church, and of my order.
 “ Those are the royal dignities, and the excellent
 “ laws, for which a christian king should petition,
 “ and which he should observe.—And to you,
 “ my brethren, I have not written to bring
 “ shame to any of you; but that, convinced by
 “ my arguments, you may be willing and be
 “ able, with greater force and courage, to
 “ perform your duties. The effect will bring a
 “ speedier peace to me, and ampler liberty to
 “ the church. Pray heaven, for me, that, in
 “ this tribulation, my faith may not be shaken.
 “ Fare ye well in the Lord”!

Writes also
 to Foliot.

Viewing the bishop of London, as the real author of the address from his suffragans, to which he had just replied, Becket, in the warmth of resentment, wrote to him. The letter is in substance, the same as that I have given, only more pointed, more severe, and more animated. Foliot he considered as his declared enemy, and as the engine which gave motion to the whole

“ Ep. 127.

series of oppression: as such he addresses him. — Astonishing, indeed, he says, it is, that a man of his erudition and calling, should be such an enemy to truth and justice, as to wish, by every means, to overthrow the church: that the attempt proved the derangement of his mind, for it resembled a man who should tie a string round a huge mountain with intent to pull it down. “You may think,” he observes, “that anger or dislike dictated this severe reflection. By no means: your own letter suggested it.” Which, he tells him, is of the scorpion-make, with a sting in the tail, professing, at first, great submission and obedience, and then appealing that he may not obey. And yet, this very obstacle to obedience, he can unblushingly term a *remedy*! “The repulses, you have twice experienced in that quarter, (Rome,) might, I think, have checked this forwardness, when you tried in vain the force of entreaties, of presents, of threats, and of promises. But a third attempt may perhaps be more successful, for which you have allowed yourself almost twelve months.”

“As to the king’s favors,” he says, “which you have set before my eyes in a large heap, it was a useless labor. For I call God to witness, that, under the sun there is nothing so dear to me as his favor and well being;

BOOK " provided the concerns of religion and the
 II. " church be unimpaired. Without this his reign
 1166. " cannot be happy or secure. All then you
 " have said of his royal bounty to me, I am
 " ready to allow : I know , indeed , that his
 " kindness has been greater, than even you have
 " commemorated. But for this was I to sacrifice
 " the liberty of the church ? Much less for my
 " own reputation , which you are pleased to
 " observe , has suffered by the imputation of
 " ingratitude. Should an angel from heaven
 " advise dissimulation to me, I would tell him
 " to be gone ; that he knew not the things of
 " God." — If the king's mother dissuaded his
 promotion , he can only say , that it was not
 publicly known. But there might, he significantly
 remarks , be some ecclesiastical persons , who ,
 disappointed in their hopes , did repine on the
 occasion ; and who knows , but they may be the
 authors and advisers of the present unhappy
 dissensions?

" But you very confidently assert, that the
 " king has ever been disposed to make satisfac-
 " tion : then answer to a few questions ;" and he
 details the sufferings of his friends, (many of
 whom were even ignorant of the controversy,) of
 his family, of himself, and of the church of
 Canterbury. " And not repair these evils, and
 " daily to add to them shall it be called satisfac-

“ tion? But perhaps to comply with the desires B O O K
 “ of the malevolent is what you term satisfaction.” II.

He writes, that the king would abide by the judgment of his realm; as if, he says, the concerns of the church were amenable to that tribunal. “ My brother; rather use your
 “ interest in persuading him to preserve the
 “ peace of the church, not to covet those things
 “ which do not appertain to his administration,
 “ to honor the priests of God, and not to
 “ mind who they are, but whose servants they
 “ are. This would be better for you both.” 1166.

Mentioning the suspension of the bishop of Salisbury, he observes: “ But at this,” you say,
 “ you are alarmed. What? does the fire in your
 “ neighbour’s house make you tremble! If so, be
 “ alarmed to some purpose for the evil you
 “ have done. And then intimate to the king,
 “ that God has established two distinct powers
 “ upon earth, one spiritual, the other temporal;
 “ and that the rights of neither can be infringed,
 “ without opposing the order of heaven. — On
 “ another occasion, recommend to him the
 “ behaviour of the emperor Constantine to his
 “ bishops, which history has recorded, and which
 “ merits to be imitated.” — He concludes, by
 seriously entreating him and the other bishops,
 not to permit schisms to divide them, or secret
 malice to cloud their minds, but to aim to

BOOK acquire one heart and one soul in the lord.
 II. “ Nor let us forget that tremendous judge, before
 1166. “ whose tribunal, the fear of earthly power and
 “ all reliance on it then removed, truth alone
 “ shall plead our cause ”.

To this spirited and sarcastic address, which shows that neither the austerities of Pontigny, nor its heavenly contemplations, had unedged the primate's resentment, Gilbert is said to have replied. The reply lay, for centuries, enveloped in its own dust; but it was discovered, and on it has been built a life of Becket³⁴, contradicted by the notorious facts of history, by the declarations of his suffragans, in some instances, and by other witnesses, in all, and by the well-known character of the man. I cannot admit it here; but it shall have its place³⁵.

Is driven
 from Pon-
 tigny.

The king, in the mean time, had sent an embassy to Rome, not so much with a view of prosecuting the appeal he had announced at Chinon, as to soothe the pontiff, to bribe the cardinals, and to procure a deputation of two legates from his holiness, on terms most favorable to himself. At the head of this embassy, to the surprise of all men, was John of Oxford, now dean of Salisbury, then excommunicated, denounced as a schismatic at Rome, and the

³³ Ep. 108.

³⁴ Hist. of. Hen. II.

³⁵ See Appendix ii.

notorious enemy of Alexander and the primate. The event, however, will show, how wise was the choice of Henry. — Seeing with pain the undisturbed life which his enemy was permitted to lead at Pontigny, in the arms of the Cistercian order, and protected by Louis, Henry sent a letter to the general chapter at Cîteaux, forbidding them to harbour him any longer, if they valued the lands and houses they possessed in his territories. The primate generously withdrew. But the French monarch dispatched a nobleman, with three hundred men, to escort him: “Let him come to me,” said he, and experience the benevolence of my people;” requesting, at the same time, he would chuse the place of his residence. He chose Sens, or rather, the convent of St. Columba near its walls, which he entered, and was received with joy, the bishop of the city and its people welcoming his arrival. It was the month of November³⁶. This further instance of vindictive prosecution, still more exalted the fame of the sufferer, and, as the appeal was pending, it was deemed a glaring violation of established equity. The measure was barbarous and impolitic.

Triumphant in his embassy, John of Oxford now returned from Rome. He proclaimed, as he passed the towns, that two legates would

BOOK

II.

1166.

John of
Oxford's
embassy.

³⁶ Gerv. Hoved. Vita. c. 17, 18, 19.

BOOK II. 1166. soon follow, to give glory to Henry, and to humble his haughty adversary. In truth, the gold of his master he had largely distributed with both hands, and but few of the sacred college had refused it³⁷. They espoused his cause. — Admitted to the presence of the pope, he first swore that, when he was at Wurtzburgh, in the diet of the empire, he had done nothing against the faith of the church, or the interest and honor of his holiness. He then presented a letter from the king. It spoke the bearer's praises, and entreated that all credit should be given to his word. "In my master's name then," said the ambassador, I submit the controversy concerning the customs of England, which has so long subsisted between him and the primate, to the judgment of your holiness: confirm them, or annul them, as it shall seem best, and prescribe the terms of peace." The extraordinary declaration was followed by another oath; when he prayed that legates might be sent, with full powers, to hear the appeals, and terminate all disputes. "The difference," he then said, "between the king and our archbishop, might, I think, be accommodated, were there an honest man to mediate. To the

³⁷ Ep. 54. ap. Baron.

“utmost I will exert my poor abilities.” The infidious offer was believed. “And now,” concluded he, “the deanry of Salisbury, for which I have so much suffered, I resign to your holiness.” Alexander, naturally sincere and unsuspicious, was deceived by these imposing professions, accompanied, probably, by the acclamations of the cardinals; and he granted all he asked. He absolved him from the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the primate, he reinstated him in the deanry of Salisbury, and he promised that legates should be sent, naming one, in particular, whom Henry had requested. As a final mark of favor, he presented him with a ring, and dismissed him³⁸.—He brought letters, confirming, in part, his boasting assertions, which suspended the powers of the archbishop, till the whole cause, as it regarded himself and the king, and the appeal of the bishops, should be examined, and canonically decided by the legates³⁹.

BOOK

II.

1166.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the primate and his friends, when this humiliating news reached them. He wrote letters, expressive of strong indignation, censuring the weak pliancy of the pontiff, and the venality of the sacred

³⁸ Joan. Sarisb. ep. 97, 98. 163. apud Baron.

³⁹ Ep. 157. 164, 165, 166.

BOOK college. "If the reports be true," wrote
 II. Becket to a friend, "he has not only choked
 1166. "and strangled me; but himself, all ecclesiastics,
 "and the two churches of France and England."
 Louis was not less irritated, and he declared
 that the legates should not enter his kingdom.
 "Had he sent them," said he, "to take the
 "crown from my head, I should not have
 "been more troubled;" alluding to the suspen-
 sion of Becket's legatine powers, and his sub-
 jection to the legates⁴⁰.—Henry, and his courtiers,
 on the other hand, were not less elated. "I
 "have the pope and all the cardinals in my
 "purse;" said he, "nor need you fear any of
 "their threats;" and he then told them, from
 his ambassador, what cardinals had taken money,
 and by what means, they had been bribed⁴¹.
 His chief design, it seems, was, to gain time,
 thinking that Alexander might die, in which
 case, he would acknowledge no successor, who
 should not be favorable to his views: he also
 hoped to procure the deposition of the arch-
 bishop. If he empowered John of Oxford to
 submit the customs of Clarendon to the judgment
 of the pope, it was, indeed, an extraordinary
 measure, for which the blind admirers of Henry

⁴⁰ Ep. 164, 165.

⁴¹ Ep. 179.

must account. To me the whole transaction is mean and unprincely.—With regard to Alexander; he was undoubtedly imposed on. His intentions were upright, and he hoped, by the concessions he made, to conciliate all parties, and to procure peace to the church of England. Of all, whom the action concerned, he was the freest from blame, and even the king's agent could but say he had, by his arts, deceived him. He pretended not that he had offered him gold; yet at the time, his exigences were great, and his alarms were greater. Frederic Barbarossa, with his anti-pope, approached towards the gates of Rome.

BOOK

II.

1167.

Since the month of November, the emperor, with a large army, had been returned into Lombardy. To break the confederacy of Verona, or, at all events, to desolate their territories, and to seat Pascal in the chair of St. Peter, was his principal design. His minister, the archbishop of Cologne, he detached before him into the neighbourhood of Rome, while himself, with the rest of his troops, ravaged the plains of Bergamo, and destroyed many castles of the Brescians. He then followed; but Rinaldo had made good use of his German soldiers, and of the treasures he carried with him. To the first the towns had submitted; and Rome, it seemed, would not long withstand the powerful influence of his gold. The venal people took money from

Affairs of Italy
and Rome.

BOOK both parties, and sufficiently declared that they
 II. should have their fealty who would reward it
 1167. best. Alexander was strongly patronized by some
 noble families. The emperor was on his march,
 blasting, like the breath of pestilence, the
 productions of the earth, and exacting from the
 people contributions and hostages. He halted
 long in Romania, and then laid siege to Ancona,
 which belonged to the emperor of the east. The
 garrison made a stout resistance: and after three
 weeks he retired, under the specious disguise of
 a feigned capitulation. Apulia, he meant, should
 next feel the terror of his arms; and it seemed,
 as if his intention was to penetrate into the heart
 of the kingdom of Naples. Long, we know, he
 had meditated war against the new throne, which
 the children of the Norman Tancred had erected
 there. But having advanced to the Tronto, he
 suddenly turned northward, solicited by Pascal,
 whose interest for a time he had neglected, and,
 with his whole army appeared within sight of
 Rome⁴².

Alexander, in the mean time, had resisted the
 attacks of Rinaldo of Cologne, and opposed his
 gold by greater largesses to the people. He also
 repaired the battered walls, strengthened the
 towers, armed the citizens, and prepared for a

⁴² Murat. an. 1167

vigorous defence. But Frederic lost no time. He assaulted the castle of St. Angelo, which the family of the pontiff defended, and the next day, with all his machines, and the flower of his troops, opened his attack on the church of St. Peter. It was well fortified, and well manned. Vain, for a whole week, were the efforts of the assailants. Their *ballistæ* had thrown darts, their *petrariæ* stones, their rams had battered, and their moveable towers had assaulted. On the eighth day, the Germans set fire to a church contiguous to that of St. Peter. The flames raged, and threatened universal destruction, when the besieged capitulated. On Sunday, which was the following day, Pascal, in great pomp, entered the church, where he celebrated mass, and put a golden wreath round the brows of Frederic, the emblem of his patrician dignity. But on Tuesday, he was crowned as emperor, and with him Beatrix his august consort. It was now his wish rather by address and treaty, than by any further efforts of force, to induce the Romans to adopt his measures. His ministers held conferences with the nobles, and he sent a deputation to the cardinals, proposing that both the popes resign the pontificate, and that a new one be chosen; adding that, there was no other method of restoring peace, and that himself, were the terms accepted, would no more

B O O K interfere in the election of the Roman bishops.

II. The proposal in general pleased ; but the
1167. dignitaries of the church peremptorily rejected
it ; and Alexander , quitting the Lateran palace ,
where , till now , he had resided , was received
by his noble friends into the towers they had
fortified , in the heart of the city.

Nor did two galleys secretly come up the
Tiber , sent by the young king of Sicily , who
the year before had succeeded to his father ,
bringing treasure to Alexander , and commissioned
to rescue him from his perilous station. With
tears he thanked his noble benefactor , accepted
the money ; but refused to quit the city. The
galleys returned ; and Alexander , the same day ,
distributed his new wealth , part to the leaders
of his party , trusting that it would bind them
more firmly to his interest , and part to the guards
at the several gates. The emperor still enlarged
his offers , and gained on the multitude. He
promised to confirm the senate , and to allow
them many immunities through all his dominions ;
in return , only asking for the rights of their
sovereign for himself , and admission for his
friend to the chair of St. Peter. In despair of
longer success , Alexander was prevailed on to
retire ; and in a pilgrim's habit he escaped ,
accompanied by some cardinals , and after various
journeys by sea and land entered the city of

Beneventum. The imperial ministers then crossed the Tiber, and received, in the name of Frederic, the solemm homage of the Roman people. All did not submit; and many, while they consented to receive Pascal within the walls, refused to withdraw their obedience from Alexander.

BOOK
II.
1167.

The visitation of heaven now came, says the historian. Great rains fell, succeeded by violent heats, and, in a few days, a pestilential fever attacked the imperial army. It was the beginning of the month of August. So furiously did the distemper rage, that within seven days, a great part of the army perished, and with them many princes, prelates, and nobles, who attended the expedition. Frederic retired, leaving the sick behind; but the contagion pursued him: more than two thousand died on the march, and the survivors, for many months, remained wan and feeble. Through many difficulties, for the Lombards opposed his return, himself arrived in Pavia[†]. It is related, that the bones of the German nobility, dried by boiling, were carried back to their own country^{**}.

No sooner had Frederic, in the preceding winter, begun his march towards Rome, than

[†] Act. Alex. Chron. Laud. an. 1167.

^{**} Chron. Ursperg.

BOOK II. 1167. the Lombard cities, whom new oppressions daily irritated, entered into a more extensive confederacy. The Milanese were invited to join them; who, though dispersed in four villages and in hovels round their late city, had not, even in this state, been permitted to breathe unmolested. They acceded to the proposal; when a general meeting took place, and the confederates bound themselves by oath, to defend one another against the oppression of the emperor and his ministers. It was also agreed, that, on a certain day, they should reconduct the Milanese into their deserted city, and remain with them, till they were in a condition to protect themselves. On the appointed day, the cities which were charged with this commission, sent out their troops. They found the Milanese, in anxious expectation, waiting their arrival, and at their head they entered the ruins of the fallen city. All hands, in a moment, were employed. They cleared away the rubbish, opened the ditches, repaired the walls and demolished towers; and, in a short time, houses were made habitable, and its rising bastions lowered defiance. The confederates then retired; but they were ordered to attack some places, devoted to the emperor, and particularly the castle of Trezzo deemed almost impregnable, where a vast treasure was

kept. The castle was taken , however , and burned to the ground. BOOK
II.

Thus were things situated , when Frederic returned from Rome. To recruit his enfeebled army , he called on the few cities , which remained in his obedience , to send in their forces , and he assembled a diet of his friends. In great irritation, he expressed his anger ; by name summoned the confederated cities ; ordered their hostages to be hanged ; pronounced the sentence of *ban* , that is , of proscription against them and throwing his glove into the air , defied them to arms. Collecting then what troops he could , he laid waste the lands of the allies ; but they met him in the field , opposed his devastations , and near Placentia , offered him battle. He retreated precipitately , and shut himself up within the walls of Pavia⁴⁵. 1167.

Though the legates , for whom Henry had petitioned , had left Rome as early as the month of January , they did not arrive in Normandy before the end of summer. They were two cardinals , William of Pavia , who has been already mentioned , and Otho of St. Nicholas. The ample powers, with which , at the instigation of John of Oxford , they had been first intrusted , were , before their arrival , considerably abridged. Legates arrive
in France.

⁴⁵ Chron. Laudon. *ibid.*

B O O K II. 1167. To this, the letters of the primate and his friends, and the anger of the French monarch, which I related, had moved Alexander. He therefore commanded his ambassadors to effect a reconciliation, if possible, between Henry and the archbishop, and, till that were done, not to touch the other matters in debate. The boasting of John of Oxford, gave great pain to the honest pontiff. He wrote to the primate, earnestly begging, that he would dispose his mind for concord, and not weigh too nicely the terms on which it should be proposed. He tells him to trust to the legates, and to entertain no doubts of William of Pavia⁴⁶.—He wrote to the kings. To Henry he recommends his legates, as the true representatives of himself, vested with full powers, and he begs he will acquiesce in the instructions they have received from him.—To Louis he speaks in high terms of the primate, and thanks him for the great kindness he had shown him in his exile: he likewise requests, that he will use his good offices to promote the reconciliation, which he so ardently desired: “But should our efforts fail,” he adds, “might it be agreeable to you, and not offensive to the dignitaries of your realm, I should be happy to appoint the archbishop my legate in the kingdom of France. Let this be secret⁴⁷.”

⁴⁶ L. ii. ep. 1. 23. ⁴⁷ Ep. 2. 43.

Much was the primate's mind disaffected to William of Pavia. He deemed him his enemy, and he had reasons for the suspicion. Henry, who had known him, when he was before in France, had particularly requested that he should be one of the legates, and it was now confidently reported, that, could he procure the archbishop's deposition, the see of Canterbury had been promised to him by the king. On his arrival in the south of France, he wrote to Becket, saying that, from motives of sound policy he had hitherto disguised his good will towards him; that he came to terminate the points of litigation between him and his master; and that he advised him to avoid discussions, and only to aim at concord. Becket prepared a reply, pointed and bitter; but, at the representation of his secretary, he did not send it, and wrote another in terms more gentle and respectful. With Otho he was better satisfied⁴.

The legates, being come into Normandy, waited on the king. They found him at Caen, sullen, irritated, impetuous. He had lately been at war with Louis; and the earls of Flanders and Boulogne, not long before, for reasons I will explain, had threatened to invade England. Becket, he said, was the author of all the evils;

⁴ Ep. 9, 10, 11. 18.

BOOK II. 1167. it was he who had animated the princes against him—They presented letters from his holiness, which he read with attention, and then observed, that they agreed little with some instructions, which, he knew, the primate had, since their departure, received from Rome. “The pontiff.” said he, “has been deceived about the customs “ of my realm: if, in my time, any have been “ introduced, adverse to the laws of the church, “ he may annul them.” He was persuaded, however, to permit them to treat with the archbishop; and they sent messengers to him, appointing a day of conference”. But, on no side, were the tempers properly disposed to concord.

Conferences
of Gisors and
Argentan.

On the eighteenth of November, they met near Gisors. With the legates came the archbishop of Rouen only, for the prelates and abbots who had been ordered from England, were not allowed to attend. Becket was accompanied by some of his friends.—The legates opened the conference. They spoke of the pope’s kindness, of his attention to the primate, of the fatigues of their own journey, and of the perils they had undergone: they represented the calamitous state of the church, the miseries of the times, the power of the king, his attachment to the Roman see,

” Gervas. an. 1167. ep. 28.

and the favors and honors he had heaped on the archbishop: but they also enumerated the king's complaints against him, and particularly that of his having been the instigator of the late hostilities. "And by what means then," said they to the primate, "shall his anger be appeased?"

"We recommend moderation and humility."

— "I am sensible," replied the primate, after some pause, "of the pope's goodness to me, and of your's. The king I have not injured; but he has injured the church of Canterbury, and me. He accuses me of having instigated the princes against him. The king of France knows that it is not true. Whilst I have spiritual arms at my disposal, I shall not be so inconsistent as to recur to others. You speak of moderation and humility. I am ever ready to show the most obsequious submission to my king, saving, the honor of God, the liberty of the church, and my own rights. Will you add to or take away from, these conditions?"

— "These are general declarations," observed William of Pavia; "let us come to particulars. You are not a better man than your predecessors. Will you promise the king, before us, to observe all the *customs*, which, in their days, his ancestors enjoyed, and thus recover your fee and your master's favor?" — He answered: "No king ever exacted that promise from any

BOOK II. 1167. “ of my predecessors; nor will I ever engage to
 “ obey *customs*, which are manifestly adverse to
 “ the liberty of the church, to the privileges of
 “ the holy see, and to the law of God. In your
 “ hearing, I was released from them at Sens.
 “ You likewise heard the solemn declaration of
 “ his holiness, that, sooner than submit to such
 “ abuses, the pastor of the flock should present
 “ his throat to the executioner. Again you
 “ shall hear them.”—They were read.—“ And
 “ now,” continued Becket, “ what is your
 “ opinion? Can the priest who values his order
 “ and his salvation, subscribe to them, or even
 “ connive at their observance? I did homage to
 “ the king, *saving my order*, and under that
 “ reserve, will I bear true fealty to him.”—The
 cardinal insisted, that it would be better to give
 way in all things, than thus expose the church
 to perpetual vexation; and he used many argu-
 ments to induce him to compliance. “ The
 “ example,” replied Becket, “ would be per-
 “ nicious, and draw after it the ruin of discipline
 “ and of ecclesiastical liberty. I cannot comply.”
 —Would he abide by their judgment, they then
 asked, in his general dispute with the king? If
 he declined it, the temper of his mind would
 be evident, and the king would be justified.
 —Determined not to trust his cause to the decision
 of William of Pavia, he answered with caution;

That were he and his friends restored to their possessions, which had been violently seized, they would submit to any judges, whom his holiness might appoint; but were an expensive suit to be incurred, it must be evident, in his present indigence, that he could not support it. — In the cause of the appeal, they finally proposed, would he accept their judgment? — “On this head,” he replied, “I have received no commands from Rome, nor can I defray the expenses which such a process must necessarily entail on me”. — The conference ended.

Becket, in the relation he gives to the pope, says, that he acted with all possible caution, but that knowing the influence the king had gained, and the dispositions of one, at least, of the legates, common prudence forbade him to risk a cause of such importance in their hands. Should the address, the eloquence, the authority, he observes, of William of Pavia, but once be allowed to co-operate with the power and untractable spirit of Henry, his holiness, as well as himself, must expect an attack, from which they would not be easily extricated. — The next day, the legates saw the king of France, who assured them on oath, that the primate had ever advised him to

“ Ep. 28. 30.

BOOK cultivate a good understanding with the English
II. monarch ⁵¹.

1167. From Gisors they proceeded to Argentan, where Henry was. He met them, with great affability, on the road, and conducted them to their lodgings. Early, after mass, the next morning, they were admitted to audience, where many prelates and abbots were present. What passed, is not known; but in about two hours, they came out, and the king walked with the legates to an outer door; "May my eyes never look on another cardinal!" said he aloud, as he turned from them. They retired precipitately, and the bishops returned with the king to his chamber. It was almost evening before the council broke up, when the bishops, seemingly in much agitation, waited on the legates. — The next day, the bishops were again a long time with the king, and many secret messages passed between him and the legates: but, on the following morning, by break of day, he went out with his dogs and hawks, purposely, it was thought, to be absent. The bishops then met, and, after some consultation, adjourned to the church, where they requested the attendance of the legates. The legates took their seats between the archbishops of Rouen and York. The bishops of London, Salisbury,

⁵¹ Gerv. ut sup.

Chichester, and Worcheſter, were there, with two French prelates, many abbots, and a great concourſe of laity²². Gilbert of London addreſſed the legates.

BOOK

II.

1167.

“ Underſtanding, that you came with full
 “ powers to terminate the diſpute between our
 “ lord the king, and the primate of Canterbury,
 “ as alſo to hear our appeal, we have waited on
 “ you prepared to anſwer or to accuſe; and we
 “ will abide by your ſentence. The king makes
 “ the ſame offer; he will adhere to your judgment,
 “ whatever it may be. If then the inſtructions of
 “ the pope are not executed, neither we, nor
 “ you, it ſeems, are in fault. The blame muſt
 “ fall where it ſhould. But the primate is precipitate and headſtrong; we therefore again
 “ renew our appeal, and we mean it ſhould
 “ include all England. — This is the quarrel
 “ between the king and him. The king demands
 “ from him forty thouſand marks of ſilver, a
 “ ſum he received when chancellor. He replies,
 “ that he was diſcharged from this debt at his
 “ promotion, as if it had the effect of baptiſmal
 “ water, which remits ſin. — We appealed to
 “ Rome, becauſe we were oppreſſed by his
 “ power, and leſt, had we ſubmitted to his
 “ ſentence, the king ſhould have been induced

²² Ep. 6.

BOOK II. 1167. “to join the schism.” — The appeal was accepted, which extended to November in the following year, and the parties dispatched messengers to Rome and to the primate⁵³. Thus were all proceedings again suspended.

The legates preparing to depart, had private conferences with the king, from which it appears that his mind was strangely agitated, and that he had involved himself in difficulties, out of which, neither address nor violence could draw him. He told cardinal Otho, that he would permit Becket to return peaceably to his see; and as to the customs, if he would not be satisfied with the opinion of any hundred men in his dominions, or of the bishops, to whom he was ready to refer the question, he would then leave it to the pope with this only reserve, that his children should not be disinherited: “For in my own life-time,” he added, “I can readily permit his holiness to reject what statutes he pleases.” He confirmed all this with many and extraordinary oaths; and, as they took leave, he said: “I beg you will acquaint his holiness with my submission and the equity of my cause; and intercede with him to free me, at all events, from the primate.” He wept, and so seemed William

⁵³ Ep. 6.

of Pavia: but his colleague, with some difficulty, abstained from laughing ⁵⁴. The legates then wrote to the primate, informing him of the appeal, and forbidding him, in the pope's name, to pronounce any censures on the kingdom of England ⁵⁵. It was the middle of December, when they departed towards Italy.

Seldom had a more solemn farce been exhibited. Henry had exerted every nerve, in the embassy of John of Oxford, to procure legates devoted to his interest; and the pope, deceived by the protestations of the envoy, had delegated to them such powers, as could answer every wish of the king. But these powers, on the representations I have mentioned, were either recalled, or he marked out another line of conduct to his legates. The discovery of this change it was, which so much irritated the king, in his first interview at Argentan. William of Pavia, notwithstanding, was well-disposed to favor the monarch, and to go all lengths in his service; only he would not sacrifice his master, or rather, he would have been most willing, by serving two masters; to have conciliated the favor of both. Henry was no match for these Italian politicians; yet unwarily, or forced by the circumstances of the times, he had laid himself at their mercy. He

⁵⁴ Ep. 6.

⁵⁵ Ep. 29.

B O O K threatened, at a distance, the court of Rome, as
II. he did the primate: but he feared, either from
1167. conscience or other motives, to relinquish the
communion of Alexander, and how to free him-
self from Becket he knew not. His bishops,
though they went with him in opposing the
primate, would, that moment, have turned their
backs, had he joined the schism. The reiteration
of appeals may seem futile and inefficient; but it
was, in truth the only means whereby the dreadful
powers of excommunication could be suspended.
Becket, throughout, was the only firm and
consistent character. He never deviated from
what seemed to him the line of rectitude, and
he might have smiled, had his situation been at-
tended with ease, at the perplexities of Alexander,
the violent, but impotent, anger of Henry,
the vain policy of the legates, and the obsequious
ductility of the English prelates. He wrote again
to the pope and cardinals, with the most free
and independent spirit, (it was after the charge
he had just received from the legates,) and to
judge from his language, he felt the superiority
of his own character. "It is not by dissimulation
"and artifice," said he to them, "that the
"church should be governed, but by justice and
"truth".

^s Ep. 46, 47.

Some hostilities have been mentioned. They were of little moment, originating from a feudal dispute between the kings, which almost daily happened, and terminating, as usual, in the destruction of castles, and the burning of villages. Seeds, of unceasing enmity were sown on the very limits of their respective empires; their vassals, as interest, or passion, or partiality, inclined, suggested perpetual motives for war; and the protection shown to Becket irritated, from night to morning, the hot spirit of Henry. Louis, on the other hand, religious and fond of churchmen, viewed his rival in the light rather of a heathen and unbeliever. A truce, however, was agreed on.

Another dispute threatened to Henry more serious evils. The earldom of Mortagne in Normandy, which had belonged to king Stephen, was claimed by the earl of Boulogne, in the right of his wife, that king's only surviving child. Under the same title, he likewise pretended to some revenues in England. His brother, the powerful earl of Flanders, supported these claims; and as Henry rejected the demand, they had recourse to arms. Six hundred vessels were equipped; for they meant to invade England, during the absence of the king. The armament was great, and England had not then, it seems, a naval force to oppose against it. In

B O O K

II.

1167.

Hostilities in
France and
Flanders.

BOOK II. 1167. the intestine broils of the late reign, commerce had been neglected; and, as Henry was in possession of such an extensive coast on the French continent, all fear of invasion, from that quarter, had ceased. Flanders was a maritime and commercial country. But the earls, in question, were his near relations, and bound to him by many favors shown them, in their minorities. The blood of princes is no lasting tie, and favors are brittle, in the competition of interest. The militia of England became its bulwark, that is, such vassals as the laws of the age had trained to arms, and whom the crown could call to its assistance. Richard de Lucy was regent of the kingdom, and he so disposed his troops, that the earls were deterred from landing; and on Henry offering an annual pension of a thousand pounds, in lieu of all claims, (equal to fifteen thousand now,) the brothers declared themselves satisfied. The earl of Boulogne thus became vassal to the king; for the pension was deemed a *benefice*, which, agreeably to the feudal tenures, demanded a return of homage and fealty¹⁷.

Death of
Matilda.

At this time died Matilda, and she died regretted, principally by the Normans, and the inhabitants of Rouen, in which city she had long resided, and where her munificence and

¹⁷ Gerv. ut. sup.

benefactions had been great. She built a stone-bridge over the Seine, (where the bridge of boats now is,) esteemed one of the noblest works of the age. She erected churches and founded convents, and displayed her bounty in other pious and charitable donations; and, at her death, left large sums to be distributed among the sick and indigent. In the dispute with the primate she had taken no decided part, but the pope had enjoined her to mediate between him and her son, and messengers, from both parties, had endeavoured to conciliate her favor. She disliked many of the customs of Clarendon, and she blamed the king for having reduced them to writing, and insisted that the bishops should swear to observe them. This, she said, his predecessors had not deemed necessary".—Matilda, as I have before observed, in the last acts of her life was truly great. To her son she relinquished the sceptre of England, to secure which she had gone through a world of perils; and with it the rich domains of her husband, retiring herself to privacy, and never, as it seems, casting a repentant look back on the brilliant possessions she had left behind. Yet Matilda was a woman; and Matilda was arrogant and ambitious, fond of power, and of the thousand charms which

" L. i. ep. 52, 53.

BOOK II. wait on royalty! She was buried in the abbey of Bec, and on her tomb was written,

Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima partu,
Hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens⁵⁹.

1168. Fortune, which hitherto had generally favored the schemes of Frederic, now chose to make him the sport of her most playful moods. We left him shut up in Pavia, having retired precipitately from before the confederated army. But in Pavia he did not think himself secure. All the winter he roved from place to place, seldom sleeping more than two nights in the same town or castle. The number of his enemies increased, and it was reported that the Lombards, with an army of twenty thousand men, were ready to march against him. He resolved secretly to withdraw into Germany. The marquis of Montferrat was his only friend. In his castles he distributed the numerous hostages, he had before received from the Italian cities, and having obtained permission to pass through the territory of Savoy, he set out, escorted only by thirty horsemen, and taking along with him some of the principal hostages. It was the month of March. Approaching to Susao, he ordered Zilio de Prando,

⁵⁹ Mat. Par. sub. an. 1186.

a noble Brescian hostage, to be hanged, charging him with having been active in the confederacy; and he entered the city. The citizens, soon informed of the cruel act, rescued the other hostages, and with arms in their hands, went in search of the emperor. He had been apprized of their design, and having left in his bed, it is said, one of his officers, who in features resembled him, he disguised himself as a servant, and in company with five others departed, pretending they belonged to the retinue of a great nobleman who would soon follow. Thus they travelled through unfrequented roads, and after some days arrived on the confines of the kingdom of Burgundy⁶⁰. This Frederic, in the habit of a menial servant, was he, at whose name, not long before, the cities of Italy had trembled, and whom the learned doctors of Bologna had pronounced to be master of the world!

The confederates, hearing of the retreat of their mighty enemy, laid siege to a castle, where many of their hostages were confined, and took it. They attacked Pavia and the marquisate of Montferrat, on account of their friendship to the emperor; and that they might fix an eternal thorn in their side, the men of Milan, of Cremona, and of Placentia, marched into the plain

⁶⁰ Chron. Lauden. an. 1168. Joan. Sarisb, ep. 62.

BOOK II. 1168. between Aſti and Pavia, which three rivers encircle, and where the lands of the latter city and of Montferrat confine. Here they laid the foundations of a new town, which roſe ſo rapidly, that, in a ſhort time, it could receive inhabitants and defend itſelf. The people of ſeven neighbouring villages they compelled to become its citizens, and they named it Alexandria, to ſignify their reſpect for the pontiff, and their contempt of Frederic Barbaroffa. So haſtily, however, was the plan conceived and executed, that, for want of ſufficient materials, many of the houſes were covered with *ſtraw*, a circumſtance which gave occaſion to their enemies, to affix that epithet, in deriſion, to its name, which it retains to the preſent day. It is a proof of the extraordinary population of the country, if there be truth in the narration, that, within the year, Alexandria could ſend out fifteen thouſand fighting men, horſe and foot. The conſuls then, waiting on the pope at Beneventum, made a tender of their city to him, and doing homage, bound themſelves to an annual tribute⁶¹.

The league, which had begun at Veróna, now comprized almoſt all the cities of Lombardy, and the nobility, for their own ſecurity, daily acce-

⁶¹ Act. Alex. an. ut. ſup. Murat. ib.

ded to it. In the absence of the emperor they had no protection, and late events had shown, that on him they could not much rely. Alexander was himself become the animating soul of the confederacy, and the Lombards had lately petitioned, that he would reside amongst them. As they withdrew from Frederic, it was natural they should relinquish the schism; and, in the new archbishop of Milan, whom he had appointed his legate, the pontiff had a friend, who warmly patronized his interest, and whose virtues even his enemies were compelled to praise. This was Galdinus, a Milanese citizen, long famed in the churches of Lombardy⁶².

In this year, came to Beneventum, where Alexander resided, a splendid embassy from Constantinople, sent by Manuel Comnenus, the emperor of the east. Long had he cultivated the friendship of the Roman pontiff, and, two years before, a similar embassy had waited on him. It was to offer him assistance against the power of Frederic, to propose an union between the churches, and to ask for himself the imperial crown of the west. Laying their treasures at his feet, the ambassadors spoke: "Ardently has our master long wished to exalt the Roman church, his mother, and to do honor to you."

Embassy from
Constantinople
to Alexander.

⁶² Chron. Laud. Joan. Sarisb. ep. 61.

BOOK II. 1168. “ Frederic, he hears, who, by his office should
“ be her protector, is become her enemy : now,
“ therefore, does Manuel seek to help her. It is
“ time, he says, that there be one fold and one
“ shepherd. The church of his dominions, as it
“ was in ancient times, he will reunite to yours ;
“ provided his own rights be restored to him.
“ Give him the crown, of which the German is
“ unworthy, and which is his by right : his
“ treasures are open to you, and his armies shall
“ march at your command. ”

Alexander withdrew with the cardinals and the noble Romans who attended, when, having taken their advice, he returned, and said : “ I thank
“ his imperial majesty for the interest he has
“ often expressed in our concerns, and for the
“ good will he now shows to the Roman church
“ and to me. His kind professions I have heard
“ with pleasure, and what he asks, as far as my
“ duties to God permit, shall be granted. He
“ asks for the crown of the western empire. It
“ is a momentous point, indeed, involved, on
“ all sides, in perils and perplexities. The sacred
“ decisions of the holy fathers forbid me to assent
“ to it, particularly as those must be the terms,
“ you mentioned. By my office, I am to procure
“ peace to the christian world, and be the guardian
“ of its concord. The treasures you have brought
“ must return, not touched by my hands, to

“Constantinople ⁶³.” He soon after deputed two cardinals to Manuel.

BOOK

II.

1168.

And now died Pascal, the antipope, in the Vatican-palace, indeed, where the arms of the emperor had placed him, but not respected, or obeyed, by the Romans. The faction chose him a successor, John, abbot of Strume in Hungary, whom Alexander had lately promoted to the see of Tusculum. He took the name of Callixtus III.

The truce of the last year, concluded between Louis and Henry, was to expire at Easter. In the mean time, a treaty of peace was proposed, under the mediation of the earls of Flanders and Champagne. But many obstacles stood in the way of its composition: insurrections in Poitou, not discouraged by Louis; and when the conditions of the treaty were adjusted, and an interview appointed, the murder of the earl of Salisbury, Henry's general in Aquitaine, by one of the disaffected barons. The murderer was Guy de Lusignan, and the earl was returning from a pilgrimage to Compostella. Dreading the vengeance of Henry, Lusignan fled from Poitou; and we shall hear of his adventures in the kingdom of Palestine. His accomplices found an asylum in the court of France. — There was a rebellion also in Bretagne. Used as they had been

Commutations
in France,
which end in
a general
peace.

⁶³ Act. Alex. Murat.

BOOK II. 1168. to anarchy, the great barons submitted reluctantly to the restraints of order, and often thought themselves oppressed, because they were governed. Henry, with his usual celerity, quelled these licentious troubles. But again Louis received the malecontents, and listening, in the quality of supreme lord, to their complaints, promised them protection and redress. The dispositions on neither side were well formed to peace; though Henry seemed most to desire it. He had most reason. Commotions in France detained him from England, where his presence was always necessary, while in the provinces themselves, they could only generate confusion and bloodshed; and his dispute with the church became every day more alarming. The sentence of excommunication once pronounced had released every discontented baron from his allegiance. The day of meeting was at last named⁶⁴.

Louis was at Chartres, and Henry at la Ferté Bernard; and the place of conference was on the banks of the Huines, in the neighbourhood of both. Difficulties still remained. The revolted barons made many demands, which the English monarch would not satisfy, and messengers, to no purpose, passed between them. Eudo of Pontieure, with too much truth, it seems, had

⁶⁴ Gerv. Hoved. ut sup. ep. 32.

publicly accused Henry of having seduced his daughter, a young lady, whom he had delivered to him as his hostage, and he demanded justice. Henry was chagrined and irritated; and when Louis sent a messenger to let him know, that he waited his coming, he did not move. A great part of the day the king spent at the appointed spot, when, as Henry did not arrive, he crossed the river, in the presence of his nobility, washed his hands in the stream, and drank of its water, protesting aloud, that he had discharged his plighted faith. A second messenger was then dispatched, summoning Henry to give satisfaction for the faith he had broken, and Louis dismissed his nobles; but he remained himself near the place, with a few attendants. It was almost night. Suddenly, as the king was retiring, Henry galloped up to the river, armed, and accompanied by a body of armed knights. The warlike approach alarmed the French, and the historian remarks, that an action would have ensued, had not darkness prevented it⁶⁵.

What were Henry's motives for this extraordinary behaviour, cannot be conjectured, as it is certain that he sincerely wished for peace. Louis resented it with a becoming spirit, and declared, he would hear no more of the treaty, unless satisfaction were made him for the insult.

⁶⁵ Ep. ut sup.

B O O K — About this time, it appears, he was visited by
II. ambassadors from William the Lion, king of
1168. Scotland, and from the Welsh princes, offering to him aid from their masters against the king of England⁶⁶. This circumstance, if true, might still more contribute to alienate the French monarch from the treaty of peace. He marched into Normandy, and burnt a small town and two castles. Henry retaliated. — But now, in all the pomp of German magnificence, arrived at his court, Henry duke of Saxony, his son-in-law, with three great prelates, sent by Frederic Barbarossa. They offered him aid against his enemies; and would he join the schism, they promised to lead an army into the heart of France. He received them with great respect; to their noble offers returned them an answer, prudent and courtly; and when they left him, he presented them with gifts, declaring his grateful sense of the honor they had done him⁶⁷. — Thus had all the summer and autumn passed, when mutual friends again interfered, and the kings were brought to an amicable interview.

On the sixth of January, they met at Montmirail in Maine, where peace was concluded on the following terms. — 1. That Henry should

⁶⁶ Ep. ut sup.

⁶⁷ Gerv. ut sup.

renew his homage and fealty for Normandy, in the accustomed form. — 2. That he should surrender the earldoms of Anjou and Maine, and the fealty of the vassals thereof, to prince Henry, his eldest son, who should pay homage and fealty for them to the king of France. — 3. That Richard, Henry's second son, should, under the same conditions, be put in possession of the duchy of Aquitaine, and marry Adelais, the youngest daughter of Louis, but without any stipulated portion. — 4. That Henry should hold Touraine, as a fief from the earl of Blois, the latter surrendering to young Henry, the office of Seneschal, to whom, as earl of Anjou, it properly belonged. — 5. That the revolted barons of Poitou and Bretagne should be taken into favor, and their castles and lands restored “.

B O O K
II.
1168.

Such was this memorable treaty, every article of which retrenched something from the power and dignity of Henry, without any return. Circumstances there must have been, which history has not recorded, that impelled him to it. The earl of Champagne, on the side of Louis, had been the principal negociator, and a contemporary writer says, speaking of the treaty, that “ he and Henry were contending which

“ Ep. 66. Chron. Norm. Hist. of Hen. II. p. 498.

BOOK II. 1168. "should outwit the other." Which was outwitted, the treaty itself tells; and how fatally he was outwitted, a series of sad events too soon announced to Henry.—Then the young princes, who were present, approached, and did homage to Louis for their respective fiefs; and their father for Normandy.

Henry and
the primate
meet.

The archbishop of Canterbury was persuaded to present himself before Henry at Montmirail, and, without reserve, to submit to him, himself and the decision of his cause. With infinite reluctance he had consented, and he went in company with some noble and religious persons. The kings were yet together, and the courtiers stood round. The primate threw himself at Henry's feet, who instantly raised him. He then spoke, beseeching him, with much humility, to consider the forlorn and troubled state of the English church, which, for his demerits, he owned, had so long suffered. "To your majesty's judgment," continued he, "here in the presence of our lord the king of France, of these prelates, and puissant nobles, I submit the whole cause which has divided us, *saving the honor of God.*"—The fatal words, as might have been expected, roused all the fury of Henry: in the most violent and pointed terms

"Joan. Sarisb. ep. 66.

he upbraided him, calling him proud, and arrogant, and ungrateful. “When he was chancellor,” said he, “by all his display of magnificence, he only aimed to cast me from my throne.”—Becket’s behaviour was cool and respectful, and to the last observation, as he could, he replied with firmness and propriety. “My liege,” said Henry to the king of France, interrupting the primate, “attend, if you please: whatever shall displease him, he will say is against the *honor of God*, and his claims will be endless. But that you may not think, I require any thing contrary to this honor, I make him this offer. Before me there have been many kings in England, some greater, and some less, than myself; and before him have been archbishops of Canterbury, great and holy men: what, therefore, the greatest and holiest of his predecessors did for the least of mine, let him do that for me, and I am satisfied.”—The assembly loudly declared, that the king had sufficiently condescended; and as Becket was silent, Louis, with some emotion, said: “My Lord archbishop, would you be greater or better than those holy men? Why do you hesitate? See! your peace is at hand.”—“It is true,” he replied, “my predecessors were greater and better men than me; but all of them, in their days, cut off some abuses,

BOOK II. 1168. “ though not all. Had they done it, I should
 “ not have to stand in the present contest. If
 “ any of them were too cool, or too immoderate, in their zeal, we are not bound to copy
 “ their example. Freely I would return to my
 “ church, were it possessed of that liberty,
 “ which, in the time of my predecessors, it
 “ enjoyed; but admit *customs*, which are adverse
 “ to the decrees of the holy fathers, I will
 “ not⁷⁰. ”

He was proceeding, when they who had brought him thither, forcibly drew him from the ring in which he stood, urging him by every entreaty to drop that obnoxious clause, *saving the honor of God*. “ And I must sacrifice that honor,” said he, “ to regain the favor of a mortal? “ Away, away!” — Many noblemen, French as well as English, now reproached him severely, saying, his own arrogance was the only bar to peace, and that as he opposed the will of both monarchs, he no longer deserved the protection of either; but should be expelled from their territories. The day was closing, when the kings mounted their horses, and withdrew. Becket soon found himself almost alone, the few friends who remained hanging their heads in dismay, inwardly reprobating his pertinacity, and con-

⁷⁰ Vita l. ii. c. 25. Gerv. an. 1169.

cluding that all was lost. Himself only was not moved". But if, as he journeyed back to Sens, his mind, restored to cool reflection, never whispered to him, that a little more pliancy might have answered better, surely his views differed much from those of other men! But so long now had he dwelt on the object, and so much had the praise of some and the opposition of others pressed it on his conscience, that he deemed himself a sufferer for justice-sake, when, in truth, it was to a certain punctilious pride, or to obstinacy of character, perhaps, that he sacrificed his own peace, and the welfare of the church of Canterbury. So men would reason. It may be said, indeed, that he knew the king, and the suspicious insincerity of his professions.

The day after the conference, he returned to Sens. But the king of France, as he had done before, neither visited him the night he remained at Montmirail, nor supplied him with necessaries from his kitchen. This was considered as a certain token of his displeasure. His friends were much cast down, and they looked with anxiety to the near day, which, they concluded, would expel them from France. On this they conversed, asking to what land they should retire? "Be not apprehensive," said the primate laughing,

Singular behaviour of Louis, and Henry's fears.

" Vita l. ii. c. 25. Gerv. an. 1169.

B O O K

II.

1168.

“ when I am gone, you will not be molested.
“ But, should we really be shut out from Eng-
land and France, no one, I hope, will advise
“ me to look for an asylum among the Romans,
“ who seem to practise indiscriminate extortion.
“ I have another scheme. They say that, down
“ the Saone, and on the side of Provence, the
“ inhabitants are benevolent and liberal. To
“ them we will go on foot; and when they shall
“ see how wretched we are, perhaps they may
“ pity us, and give us bread, till the Lord shall
“ send us better times.” — As they were thus
conversing, an officer came up from the French
king, saying, that his majesty requested to see
the primate. “ That is to banish us all!” exclaimed
one of the company. “ Thou art no prophet,”
observed Becket, “ nor the son of a prophet;
“ hold thy peace.” They went, and found
the king, sitting with a sorrowful countenance;
nor did he rise, as the primate entered. It
presaged no good, they thought. Coolly he then
bad them take their seats, and was again silent.
His head hung on his bosom, and the whole
man was pensive. With anxious attention the
visitors eyed him, thinking it gave him pain to
pronounce their sentence: when bursting into
tears, he started up with a deep sigh, and threw
himself at the primate’s feet. The company were
astonished, and, as Becket stooped to raise him,

The king, in broken words, said: "Indeed, father,
 " you only saw: it was you only that could see.
 " We were blind, who advised you to abandon
 " the honor of God for the favor of a man. I am
 " sincerely sorry, and beg your forgiveness. To
 " God and to you I recommend my kingdom;
 " and, as long as he shall give me life, I here
 " promise never to desert you and your friends."
 The primate gave him his blessing, and they parted.
 Wonderful, from this time, was the veneration,
 which every where attended him⁷².

The king of England, hearing of this extraor-
 dinary interview, sent to Louis, expressing his
 surprise, that he should continue to protect
 Becket, after what his own eyes had witnessed at
 Montmirail. "Go," said Louis to the messengers,
 "tell your king, that if he will not relinquish
 " certain ancient customs, which some deem
 " contrary to the law of God, because they
 " appertain to his royal dignity; neither will I
 " surrender the hereditary privilege of my crown,
 " which has ever protected the unfortunate, and
 " those most who suffered in the cause of justice⁷³."
 —The mixed character of Louis bore some great
 features.

Buoyed up by the countenance of the French
 monarch, or rather, prompted by his own

⁷² Vita. c. 27. Gerv.

⁷³ Ibid.

BOOK II. 1169. temper, which nothing could bend, Becket had again recourse to severity. On all sides he spread his censures, suspending and excommunicating many, but those particularly who had pillaged, or who kept possession of the effects belonging to his see. Among these was the bishop of London, whom before, it seems, he had suspended. So general was the sentence, that scarcely among the king's chaplains was there one, from whom, at mass, he could take the kiss of peace. Fearful that the anathema might reach them, the prelates of the realm and the nobles reiterated their appeals to Rome; and the king again sent messengers to the pontiff, namely, the archdeacons of Salisbury and Landaff⁷⁴. — Thus was a general commotion raised; and the primate, doubtless, might feel some satisfaction, in viewing the storm he had yet power to bring down on his enemies.

Nor was Henry, it is said, satisfied with his application to Rome. He moved the cities of Lombardy, knowing the pressure of their situation, and the league they had formed with Alexander. To Milan he offered three thousand marks of silver, (a mark was 13s. 4d.) for the reparation of their walls; two thousand to Cremona, one thousand to Parma, and as many to Bologna.

⁷⁴ Dicet. Gerv.

He promised money to the pope, which should
release him from the exactions of the Roman
people, with ten thousand marks besides, and
the liberty to dispose of the vacant bishoprics in
England. The interest also of the king of Sicily
he implored⁷⁵. And why was the mountain thus
in labor? — To procure the removal of Becket
from France, or his translation to another see!
Yet all he could obtain was, that ministers should
be sent again to treat of a reconciliation. The
primate, in a letter to the cardinal bishop of
Ostia, speaks of these transactions, with much
indignation, and protests that no citation shall
compel him to make a journey to Rome, as his
enemies seemed to have projected⁷⁶.

BOOK
II.
1169.

The nuncios, whom his holiness appointed to
this second commission, were Gratian and Vivian,
men learned in the laws, and of great reputation
in the Roman court. They came with limited
powers, and a form of agreement prescribed by
Alexander, to which if the king would not con-
sent, they were ordered to leave him; and, lest
they might be corrupted, he bound them by an
oath, to accept no present from him, not even
their charges while they remained at his court,
till peace were concluded. They brought two
letters. In that to the primate, the pope com-

Nuncios ar-
rive from
Rome.

⁷⁵ L. iii. ep. 80.

⁷⁶ Ep. 79.

BOOK II. 1169. commands him to pronounce no censure on the king, on his realm, or the honorable persons of his realm, till the return of the nuncios; and, if any had been passed, that it be suspended for the same period. He enjoins the king, for the love of God and the remission of his sins, to restore Becket to his see, and take him sincerely into favor".—When they arrived in France, Henry was in Aquitaine, whither they were advised not to go, but to wait at Sens till his return.

Various fruit-
less confer-
ences.

The first interview was at Domfront in Normandy, towards the end of August. Returning late from the chase, the king alighted at their apartments, and while, with great politeness, he was conversing with the nuncios, up came young prince Henry to the door, with his attendant nobles, each one blowing his bugle-horn. They had killed the stag.—Early on the morrow was the conference, which passed in great debates. The king read the pope's letter with much emotion, and then demanded that the nuncios absolve those whom Becket had excommunicated. To this they would not consent, agreeably to their instructions, till he should promise to be reconciled to the primate; and also on condition, that they swore to restore what had been taken

" L. iii. ep. 1, 2.

from Canterbury. Their powers, they said, went no further. Henry hesitated; and by turns was calm and impetuous. The day was far spent. "I see," he exclaimed, "that the pontiff is not disposed to grant any request. By God's eyes, then, I'll do something else;" and turned furiously from them, "Sir, do not threaten," observed Gratian; "we fear no threats; for we come from a court that has been used to give the law to emperors and to kings." After some further altercation, he became more cool, and promised to give them an answer in eight days^s.

On the eighth day, they met at Baieux. The Norman prelates were all present; when the nuncios again requested, that the king would reinstate the primate. As usual, he, for some time, inveighed against him, and then said; "If I do any thing for that man, the pope shall be much obliged to me: but observe, you shall absolve my chaplains without the oath you talked of." The nuncios would not consent; and the king ran to his horse, and mounted, swearing, that he would never listen to another word on the subject. But the bishops interposed; and the nuncios, with much difficulty, gave way. Henry dismounted, and, after some con-

^s Ep. 6. 27.

B O O K

II.

1169.

versation, publicly declared, that, “ at the
 “ request of his holiness, he permitted Becket to
 “ return, and all those who had quitted England
 “ on his account.” Turning to the nuncios,
 he then asked that one of them, at least, would
 go into England to absolve the excommunicated.
 To this they would not agree: indeed, their
 commission did not extend so far. Again was
 Henry enraged, and again he went away, saying:
 “ Do what you will: I care not the value of an
 “ egg for you or your excommunication;” and
 remounted his horse. The bishops entreated,
 and he returned, proposing to them that they
 immediately write to the pope. As objections
 were made, he said: “ And what if they
 “ should lay my kingdom under an interdict?
 “ Can not I, who am able to take a strong
 “ castle every day of the year, arrest an ecclesi-
 “ astic who shall dare to be guilty of that act?”
 The tempest soon after ceased, when he calmly
 observed: “ After all, it is my duty to do much
 “ at the request of his holiness, who is our lord
 “ and our father: Becket, therefore, may return
 “ to his see; and him and his friends I again
 “ take into favor.” The nuncios and the assembly
 expressed great satisfaction.”

But peace was not yet concluded. The *form*
 of reconciliation remained to be settled, and the

” Ep. 6.

king insisted that the words, *saving the dignity of his kingdom*, should be inserted. "That was but a softer name for the customs of Clarendon," observed the primate's friends, and proposed that the counter-clause, *saving the dignity of the church*, should then be admitted. Assemblies were held; discussions full of acrimony were revived; and neither party would recede. Michaelmas, in the mean time, approached, when the commission of the nuncios expired, and Gratian, weary of the fruitless negociation, prepared to return into Italy. Vivian remained.

BOOK

II.

1169.

The king had more confidence in Vivian, imagining, after the departure of his colleague, that he might be prevailed on to adopt his measures. He proposed to meet him at St. Denys, to which place Vivian entreated that Becket also would repair, being convinced from some expressions of Henry, that an accommodation would now be effected. The primate very reluctantly consented, and came to Corbeil. At St. Denys, where the two kings again met on some public business, Vivian, in vain, labored to extort from Henry a final compliance with the promise, he thought, he had made him. His answers were evasive; and the Italian finding himself duped, did not restrain his anger: "So lying a prince," said he, "I never heard or saw." They parted; and the king, passing

BOOK by Montmartre, was visited by Becket. The
 II. archbishop of Rouen, with other mediators,
 1169. spoke for the primate; in his name, requesting
 that to him and his friends he would give peace,
 permit their return, and restore their possessions
 to them: "while the primate, on his side," they
 said, "was ready to do all that an archbishop
 "owed to his prince." — After some conversation,
 which seemed to promise a happy issue, the
 petition was reduced to writing, when Becket
 added that, as a pledge of favor and greater
 security, he hoped he might be reconciled to
 the king by a *kiss of peace*. This was a customary
 form in reconciliations. The petition was read,
 and much approved; but again the king had
 recourse to evasions, using a circuitous language,
 which, while it seemed to grant every thing,
 was, in fact, loaded with inadmissible conditions.
 "And as to the *kiss of peace*," said he, "willingly
 "I would grant the pledge, had I not publicly
 "sworn in my anger never to do it, though
 "concord were restored betwixt us." Thus
 ended the treaty; for the king of France and
 many others strongly advised the primate, not to
 return to his see, unless Henry gave this easy
 token of peace".

Hardly had Vivian turned his back, when
 Henry dispatched a messenger, requesting he

" Ep. 9, 10. 62. Gerv.

would return, and offering him twenty marks, would he resume his mediation. With a becoming dignity he rejected the base offer, and wrote to the king, still as a friend, advising him to embrace the late proposal, lest the storm, which threatened, immediately involve him and his kingdom¹¹. — Alarmed, indeed, was this mighty monarch, and again he sent his envoys to Beneventum; for as Gratian was returned, with the young archbishop of Sens, the peculiar friend of Becket, he doubted not, but on their representation, the evil he dreaded must at last come. Vivian also he had insulted.

With pain must Henry have reviewed the last transactions. At Domfront he had been indecently impetuous; at Baieux testy as a child, and changeful as an April-morning; at St. Denys false and illusory; and at Montmartre so triflingly evasive, as to convince most men, that the primate with reason doubted the sincerity of professions, which fear only, it seemed, in the pressure of intervals, extorted from him.

But neither would he rely on the care his ministers might take of his interest at Beneventum; nor on the influence he had before gained amongst the cardinals. He sent an edict into England of great severity, which he commanded

Severe edict
of the king.

¹¹ Ep. 62, 63.

BOOK to be universally obeyed, purporting; That if
II. any person should be found carrying any man-
1169. date from the pope or Becket, whereby an
interdict might be laid on the country, he be
treated as a traitor to the king and kingdom:
that all persons obeying such interdict, be
banished the realm, with all their kindred: that
no man appeal to the pope or the archbishop:
that no ecclesiastic go beyond sea, or return
into England, without a passport. Such, and
more were these injunctions, and the sheriffs of
the counties were commanded to tender an oath
of obedience to all the subjects of the realm,
above the age of fifteen. The laity submitted;
but the prelates, and abbots, and principal
clergy, were not so tractable. They refused to
assemble, agreeably to the king's order, and
condemned the whole proceeding. Among these
stood foremost Henry of Winchester; and the
bishop of Norwich publicly excommunicated the
earl of Chester, as a mandate from Becket in-
joined him, in the presence even of the officers
who had brought him a prohibition from the
king. Coming down from the pulpit, he laid
his pastoral staff on the altar: "Now let me
"see," said he, "who will dare to stretch his
"hand against the possessions of the church?"
—Another attempt was made to bring about a

⁸² Ep. 65. Gerv.

reconciliation,

reconciliation, which ended as others had done; and the year eleven hundred and sixty-nine closed.

BOOK
II.

The king's ministers at Beneventum had obtained, that new commissioners should be appointed, the archbishop of Rouen and the bishop of Nevers. They were ordered to wait on Henry, and to admonish him to permit the primate to return to his see, to restore to him and his friends their possessions with full security, and to be reconciled to him by the kiss of peace: but if, within forty days after this admonition, he delayed to comply, they are commanded to lay all his dominions in France under an interdict, by which the whole service of the church shall cease, save the administration of baptism, and of penance to the dying. Should the prospect of an accommodation be certain, they are authorized to absolve the excommunicated, and then to exhort the king to abolish the evil customs of his realm".—Alexander had been assured that to these terms Henry would assent, and full of this conviction he wrote many letters, to the king, to the archbishop of York, and to the suffragans of Canterbury.

1170.

New commis-
sioners ap-
pointed.

But now it was every where reported, that the king meant to crown the young prince.

" L. v. ep. 3. 6, 7, 8.

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T

BOOK II. Henry, by the hands of the archbishop of York, to the prejudice, doubtless, of the
1170. see of Canterbury, to which, by ancient custom, the coronation of our kings belonged. Roused by the news, Becket left nothing unattempted whereby he might impede its consummation. He obtained letters of inhibition from Alexander, directed to the archbishop of York and the English prelates; and himself, on every side, was loud and threatening⁸⁴. Nothing succeeded. The messengers, who were returned from Beneventum, one of whom, let it be observed, was the notorious John of Oxford, reported not only that the pope approved the measure; but that even he had empowered the archbishop to perform the ceremony. A letter to this purpose, addressed to that prelate, seems to have been circulated⁸⁵.

Prince Henry
 crowned.

In the month of March, the king embarked for England, and, after a dangerous passage, in which he lost five ships, and many of his noble train, landed at Portsmouth, after an absence of almost four years. To correct the disorders, which he saw with indignation, had disfigured the general administration of government, was his first care: but of this I shall speak afterwards,

⁸⁴ L. iv. ep. 42, 43, 44, 45.

⁸⁵ Hist. of Hen. ii. p. 540.

⁸⁶ See append. ii.

and his next was, to solemnize the coronation of his son. — The policy of this measure, which, though for a long time practised in France, had not yet been seen in England, cannot easily be discovered. An empty title, with no increase of power, was all it was designed to confer: but would not the name of king, with its pageant ensigns, naturally, in a young mind, excite a thirst for more substantial honors? — Whatever were Henry's views, hastening to their accomplishment, he convened the great council of the nation. The great council of the nation, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, sheriffs, wardens, aldermen, met him at Westminster, where, all wondering at the novel sight, in solemn pomp the prince was crowned; Roger of York, with four attendant prelates, performing the ceremony. On the following day, public homage was performed by all the vassals; and at dinner, with an ill-judged condescension, the father, with his own hands, ministered to the royal youth. He was in his sixteenth year, and by character headstrong and arrogant. With him was not crowned the princess Margaret, whom with queen Eleanor the king had left in Normandy⁷.

The commissioners, having received their mandates, had been ordered to follow the king

⁷ Gervas. Hoveden. an. 1170.

BOOK into England: and of this they acquainted him,
II. when he requested they would not expose
1170. themselves to the danger of the sea, adding,
 that he should immediately return to the continent. But Becket heard the news of the coronation with bitter pain; he heard, at the same time, that neither his own nor Alexander's letters, inhibiting the ceremony, had been publicly delivered; and he heard that one of the commissioners, with too easy a placability, had absolved the bishop of London from the sentence of suspension. His disappointment and trouble of mind, as usual, he vented in many complaints, which gave occasion to explications, and apologies, and accusations, in a multifarious correspondence".

Henry, however urgent the press of business, could not prolong his stay in England: for Louis provoked at the insult offered to him in the person of his daughter Margaret, had entered Normandy; and the term fixed for the reconciliation with Becket drew to a conclusion. He again crossed the sea, having previously assured the commissioners, that nothing should, on his side, frustrate the treaty; and an interview, besides, had been settled with the king of France, for the twentieth of July. The primate engaged to be present.

" Ep. 19 - 26.

In a meadow near Fretval, on the borders of Touraine, the kings met, and after two days conference, adjusted every cause of difference.— The archbishop of Sens, with the commissioners, then waited on Henry. In their company Becket had come to Fretval; and they so settled preliminaries, that his majesty appointed the next day for the interview. Early in the morning, with a numerous retinue, the king entered the meadow; and soon after came the primate, not unsplendidly attended. The crowd of spectators was vast. Springing from the circle, when he saw him at a distance, Henry galloped up to the archbishop, and saluted him, bareheaded. A few words of gratulation passed, and they both withdrew, familiarly conversing as they retired from the company. It did not seem, from their deportment, that they had ever been enemies.— With much gentleness, the primate exhorted Henry to retrieve his reputation which had suffered, and to make satisfaction to the church. The king assented. Becket then spoke of the late coronation, which he represented as an enormous derogation from the rights of Canterbury, and historically detailed the uniform practice from the conquest. “I doubt not,” said Henry, “but your see is the most noble amongst the western churches; nor is it my wish to deprive it of its rights; rather, as you shall advise, I

B O O K
II.

1170.

Henry and
the primate
are reconciled.

BOOK II. 1170. " will strive to repair the evil, and to restore to
 " Canterbury its pristine dignity. But to those
 " who hitherto have betrayed both you and
 " me, I will, by the blessing of God, make
 " such an answer, as the deserts of traitors
 " demand." At the words, Becket sprang from
 his horse, and threw himself before the king;
 but he, seizing the stirrup, forced him to
 remount, and said, as the tears fell from his
 eyes: " My lord archbishop, why many words?
 " Let us restore to each other our former affec-
 " tion, and in mutual good offices, forget every
 " cause of rancor. But show me honor, I beg,
 " before those yonder, who have their eyes
 " turned towards us." With this, leaving Becket,
 he rode up to the company, and observing some
 there who had been promoters of the late quar-
 rel, he spoke: " If, when I find the primate
 " full of all good dispositions in my regard, I
 " were not reciprocally good to him; truly, I
 " should be the worst of men, and prove that
 " to be true which is said of me. There cannot
 " be any counsel more honorable or useful to
 " me, than that I should strive to go before him
 " in kindness, and surpass him in the general
 " practice of beneficence." The address was
 received with the warmest plaudits.

" Ep. 45.

He sent to the primate, who remained at a distance, desiring he would now, in the face of the assembly, state his petition. The bishops, who bore the message, advised him to submit himself and his cause to the king's pleasure; but he declined their counsel, and they left him. He then deliberated with his friends, the companions principally of his exile; and having adjusted the terms, they all moved towards the king, who stood surrounded by his attendants. In the name of Becket, the archbishop of Sens spoke, and petitioned, "that he would restore to the primate his royal favor, peace and security to him and his, with the church of Canterbury, and the possessions belonging to it, as set down in a writing the king had seen; that he would be graciously pleased to amend, what had been presumptuously done against him and his church, in the late coronation; while, on his side, the primate promised love and honor, and whatever service can be performed in the Lord, by an archbishop, to his sovereign." I agree to all," replied the monarch, "and the primate and his friends I again take into favor".

A long and private conversation, with the familiarity of ancient friendship, now took place

⁹⁰ Ibid. Gerv. l. iii. c. i.

BOOK II. 1170. between them; and only as night approached, they parted, having agreed, that Becket should first wait on the French king and his other benefactors, as gratitude required; and then make some stay with Henry, before he returned into England, that the world might learn how sincere their reconciliation was. They were departing, when, it was proposed to Becket, that he should absolve the excommunicated, showing to others the indulgence, which himself had just experienced. He observed, that the cases were very different, there being some in that number, whom the pope and other bishops had suspended, and whose crimes were of various descriptions: "But being willing to show mercy to all," said he, "I will take the advice of my king, and proceed as shall seem most expedient." Apprehensive that an altercation might ensue, Henry drew the primate from the crowd, and requesting he would not heed the discourses of such men, he begged his benediction, and they all retired⁹¹.

Difficulties
are raised.

Soon after the conference, as they had been empowered, the commissioners absolved the excommunicated; and Becket dispatched agents to take possession of the lands and the effects of his fee; for the king had sent letters-patent to his

⁹¹ Ibid. Gerv. Vita l. iii. c. i.

son, whereby he was commanded to make an ample restitution of all things, as they had been possessed three months before the primate departed from England. But it was the interest of many not to comply with these injunctions. They had long received the great revenues of the see, and were not disposed to relinquish them. Excuses therefore were made, difficulties were raised, the young king was imposed on, and the day of restitution was put off. In the mean time, greater extortions were committed, and the produce of the lands, and the furniture of houses and castles, were consumed or conveyed to a distance. So the agents reported⁹².

Weeks had passed, when Becket again saw the king at Tours, where he was received by him with a marked coolness; and, being pressed to execute the terms of peace, he told him to go to England, and that his possessions would be restored. — A few days after, he met him at Chaumont near Blois, when Henry, with great kindness, conversed with him; and it was finally agreed, that he should immediately return to Canterbury⁹³. But it was evident, that the king's heart was altered, and that he felt no longer the warmth of returning affection, which

⁹² Ep. 53. Gerv. Vita.

⁹³ Vita c. 2.

BOOK he had expressed at Fretval. From that time
 II. two months had elapsed. The change might be
 1170. owing to many causes, (if ever his professions
 were sincere;) but principally it arose from the
 representations of those, who were interested in
 the prolongation of the quarrel, or who, from
 enmity to Becket, wished he might never return.
 Becket himself, on many occasions ascribed the
 whole quarrel, as he did the present breach of
 faith, not to the king, but to such men as I
 described, whom animosity and the love of
 rapine swayed. Among these he placed foremost
 Roger of York and Gilbert of London, and
 those who fattened on the lands of Canterbury*.

Alexander, to whom regularly every event
 was reported, heard with much pleasure of the
 reconciliation; but soon also he heard that its
 conditions were not complied with. He ordered
 his commissioners, therefore, to announce to the
 king, that if, within thirty days, after this ad-
 monition given, he did not accomplish the peace,
 all his dominions in France should be interdicted.
 The primate also had obtained mandates of ex-
 communication against those prelates, who had
 assisted at the coronation⁹⁵. It was the end of
 October. Preparing, therefore, to depart from
 Sens, he wrote to the king.—He speaks of the

⁹⁴ Ep. 73.

⁹⁵ Ep. 29. 31. 67, 68, 69.

reconciliation at Fretval, and he calls on God to witness the sincerity with which he embraced it: that he likewise had acceded to it with dispositions equally sincere, trusting to his professions, he had not doubted. The letters he had sent to his son, commanding a restitution of his property, evinced, at the same time, his benevolence, and the peace and security he had offered. But, under various pretences, this restitution was delayed, he observes, from motives which Henry may investigate, and which, he is well assured, have a tendency to injure his honor and the peace of the church. He mentions Ranulph de Broc, who, for seven years, had oppressed the see of Canterbury, spoiling its lands, and dissipating its revenues, and whose hands were now become doubly rapacious. To prove this he has witnesses. "In the hearing of many, he has boasted," continues he, "that I shall not live to eat a whole loaf of bread in England." Yet all these evils, he tells him, he has power to avert: but that, if, as it now appears, Canterbury must perish from the enmity certain persons bear to himself, to save her, he is ready to present his throat to the executioner. He concludes: "Once more it was my wish to see you, Sir; but in lowness of heart, as you permit me, I am compelled to revisit my afflicted church, there, perhaps,

BOOK " to perish for her safety, unless I am speedily
 II. " rescued by your goodness. But whether I
 1170. " live or die, to you I am devoted, in the Lord,
 " and ever will be. Whatever befall me or
 " mine, may heaven bless you and your chil-
 " dren " ! He never wrote more to Henry.

The primate
 returns to
 England.

Resolved to embark for England, though his friends from all quarters advised him not yet to attempt it, he sent before him his faithful secretary, John of Salisbury. Sorry was the secretary to find all true that the agents had reported, and of this he informed his master. He informed him that, besides the general state of dilapidation, of demolished houses, of empty barns, of uncultivated lands, of fallen woods, and of a ruined tenantry, the revenues of the *last half year* had been just seized, and his agents ejected from their offices. He informed him, that the archbishop of York, and the bishops of London and Salisbury, were the instigators of every violence; that they had entreated the king not to permit his return, unless he resigned his legatine powers, and unless he promised to observe the customs of Clarendon.—The primate, in the mean while, went to Rouen, hoping, as it had been intimated by the king, that he should there be enabled to discharge his debts, and return with honor: but here he found John of

" Ep. 54.

Oxford, with a letter from his master, which requested that he would no longer delay his journey, and which appointed the same John to escort him". — Evidently was Henry aware, that the primate would be exposed to danger, or he would not thus have wantonly insulted him. John of Oxford was his declared enemy, but he was the confidential servant of the king, and therefore most proper to guard him from violence. — They departed for Whitsand in Flanders.

Waiting here for a favorable wind, Becket was warned by a private messenger from the earl of Boulogne, to take care of himself. Intelligence was also conveyed to him, that the three prelates had passed through Canterbury, where they had instigated some powerful lords, the notorious Ranulph de Broc, Reginald de Warenne, and Gervase de Cornhill, with an armed force to guard the coasts, on which the primate was expected to land. Their orders were to search his baggage, from a well-grounded apprehension, that he brought mandates from the pope. But the lay-conspirators, (for conspirators certainly they were, who, unwarranted by legal power, proceeded thus violently to molest an unoffending subject,) publicly threatened his life, if he dared to land. The bishops were at Dover".

" Ep. 64. 73. Gerv. Vit. c. 3.

" Ibid.

BOOK

II.

1170.

Thoroughly apprized, as Becket expresses it, of these machinations, he took a hasty resolution, which sound policy could not justify, however much common resentment might suggest the measure, or the deserts of his enemies might call for it, or the permission of the king had empowered him to do it. The papal mandates, which suspended Roger of York, and renewed the sentence of excommunication against the bishops of London and Salisbury, he sent over, the very day before himself embarked; and they were put into their hands, while they were projecting, by every violence, to oppose the restoration of order and concord". — The occasion of this censure was the irregular coronation of the prince: but it had not been, at this time, inflicted, it seems, had the behaviour of those prelates been less malevolent and insulting; for the other bishops, who assisted at the ceremony, though involved in the same sentence, were not molested¹⁰⁰. Besides, had it been his fixed intention to proceed thus rigorously against them, and thereby to evince to the world, that his resentments were implacable, his pride unconquerable, and the love of concord most alien from his heart, he would not have waited to

⁹⁹ Ibid. Dicet. Neubrig.

¹⁰⁰ Ep. 73.

this precarious moment. It was their own hostile animosity which roused him: and if the coolness of reflection cannot applaud the step, the quick feelings of humanity will be at hand to mitigate our censure.

BOOK

II.

1170.

Still he was advised not to venture. "I see England before me," he observed, "and I will go to it, whatever may be the issue. It is enough, that the pastor has been, seven years, absent from his flock." So saying he embarked, and after a prosperous voyage, landed in Sandwich harbour, on the first day of December. — With unbounded attestations of joy he was received by the people; but the armed band, headed by the noblemen, I mentioned, who had expected him at Dover, marched in great haste to Sandwich. The inhabitants of the place took up arms, resolved to defend the primate; while John of Oxford, who with pain viewed the wild attempt, went out to meet them. In the name of the king, he forbade them to offer any injury to the archbishop or his followers, well aware that the honor of his master was concerned; and if they would speak to him, he said, they might do it in a less hostile manner. They came up unarmed, and without much ceremony, demanded that the stranger, who was with the primate, the archdeacon of Sens, should take an oath of allegiance to Henry and

BOOK
II.
1170.

his son. This was resisted. They then questioned him, with much rudeness, about the suspension of the bishops; but as the crowd round the primate was great, and not disposed to see him insulted, they left him, and returned to the prelates at Dover¹⁰¹.

The next day, he went to Canterbury. The acclamations on the road, and his reception in the city, with the ringing of bells, the music of instruments, and the songs of the clergy, spoke welcome to his heart, and attested the joys of the people. — On the morrow, came the same barons with the chaplains of the bishops, demanding their absolution from the sentence, which had been pronounced, they said, in defiance of the king, and the customs of the realm. “I did it,” replied Becket, “with the king’s permission; and absolve them I cannot: for an inferior judge cannot undo the sentence of his superior, who is here the Roman pontiff.” They urged it more strongly, and they threatened the indignation of the king. “If the two bishops then,” observed he, “will take an oath before me, according to the usual form, to obey the pope’s injunction in this affair; for the peace of the church, and out of reverence to the king, with his advice, and

¹⁰¹ Gerv. ep. ut sup.

“ with

“ with the advice of the bishop of Winchester
 “ and others of my brethren, I will venture to
 “ absolve them at my own peril, and will treat
 “ them with every mark of gentleness and
 “ affection.” The answer was reported to the
 bishops; when Roger of York (whose case the
 pope had reserved to himself) objected to the
 oath, which could not be taken, he said, without
 leave of the king. It was observed, that the
 same bishops, when lately excommunicated by
 the primate only, had been absolved without
 an oath to that effect; and they seemed now
 disposed to accede to the terms of peace. “ I
 “ have by me eight thousand marks of silver,”
 said Roger: “ them, if necessary, I will freely
 “ spend to repress the stubborn arrogance of that
 “ man. Be not deceived; rather let us repair to
 “ the king, who hitherto has protected us. If you
 “ quit him for his enemy, (for never will their
 “ reconciliation be sincere,) expect to be deemed
 “ deserters, and to be expelled from your sees.
 “ Where then will you go to beg your bread?
 “ Be true to the king. What more can Thomas
 “ do to you, than he has done already ¹⁰²?”

B O O K
 II.
 1170.

¹⁰² Vita c. 5, 6, 7. ep. 64. 73.

B O O K before their departure, they dispatched messengers
II. to the young king, by malicious insinuations, to
1170. persuade him, that it was the archbishop's intention
 to deprive him of his throne¹⁰¹! — Himself, on his
 arrival, had sent to the prince, to acquaint him
 of his return, and to apologize for the suspension
 of the bishops. He now purposed to wait on
 young Henry, who resided at Woodstock, and
 after that, to make the visitation of his diocese.
 His entrance into London was splendid; but,
 the next morning, two officers from Woodstock
 stopped his progress, commanding him not to
 enter the king's cities or castles, and to return to
 his church. The insinuations of the bishops,
 though absurd and puerile, had produced their
 effect. He obeyed.

And now returned to Canterbury, he spent
 the days which intervened before Christmas, in
 retirement, in prayer, and in sermons to the
 monks and the people; for the general aspect of
 things, and the reports of every day, clearly
 told him, that something disastrous would surely
 follow. He had reason to apprehend, as he
 says himself, that the bishops who had crossed
 the seas, would impose on the king, and rekindle
 his anger against the church, which God, says

¹⁰¹ Ep. 73.

he, avert! In other regards, amidst the fears of his friends, he was unmoved and dauntless. On Christmas day, he preached in the great church, and at the end of his sermon, told the people, that he should quickly leave them. They wept: when suddenly, changing his voice and looks, he vehemently inveighed against the vices of the age, and by name excommunicated some of the most notorious of his enemies¹⁰⁴.

The three prelates, in the mean while, with the expedition of revengeful malice, had seen the king in Normandy. In agitation they threw themselves at his feet, imploring his justice against the primate, and his clemency for themselves, for his clergy, and for his kingdom. He had abused the king's indulgence, they said, adding falsely, that he had excommunicated not themselves only, but all those who were present at the prince's coronation. "Then, by God's eyes," said Henry in a rage, "he has excommunicated me." They proceeded to say, with equal truth, that, escorted by an armed band of soldiers, he was gone to the young king, purposing to enter his castles. "And have I maintained so many cowardly and ungrateful men," exclaimed Henry, no longer master

¹⁰⁴ Vit. c. 9, 10. Gerv. Hoved.

BOOK of himself, "not one of whom will revenge the
II. "injuries I have sustained from that turbulent
1170. "priest! He added other unguarded reflexions
 against the primate ¹⁰⁵.

Is assassinated. Four gentlemen of the king's bedchamber, knights and barons of the realm, Reginald Fitzurse, William de Traci, Richard Brito, and Hugh de Moreville, willing to gratify the anger of their prince, the furious impetuosity of which they should have known better, instantly resolved to execute his menaces. They departed for England, and landing near Dover, proceeded to the castle of Ranulph de Broc, about six miles from Canterbury. Here they spent the night, concerting with that enemy of Becket, how best they should execute their design. He had under his orders a band of soldiers. These they agreed to take with them; and on the following day, which was Tuesday, the twenty-ninth of December, concealing their arms, they entered the city ¹⁰⁶.

Clarembaldus, a man of notorious depravity, whom Henry had forced on the monks, was abbot of St. Austin's. Into his monastery he received the conspirators, and entertained them, mutually conferring together on the dark business

¹⁰⁵ Vit. c. 8. 11. Gerv.

¹⁰⁶ Vit. c. 12. Gerv.

they had in hand. Mean while the primate, whose palace was a part of Christ-church, had dined, and after dinner was conversing on business, with the monks and his clergy. The knights entered his apartment, and, without ceremony, seated themselves on the ground at his feet. — “We bring you orders from the king,” said Reginald Fitzurse, after a pause of silence: “will you hear them in public, or in private?” — “As it shall please you best,” replied Becket. — “In private then,” rejoined Reginald: on which the company was told to quit the room. But he had not spoken long, when the primate observed that, it would be well, that others should hear what he said; and calling to his clergy, bad them to return. Reginald proceeded: “We order you, in the king’s name, to go to his son, and pay him the homage which is due to your lord” — “I have done it,” replied Becket. — “You have not,” said Reginald; “for you have suspended his bishops, which looks as if you would tear the crown from his head.” — “Many crowns, rather, I would place on his head; and as to the bishops, they were suspended not by me, but by the pope;” answered the primate. — “The sentence was procured by you;” he rejoined. — Becket said; “It does not displease

BOOK II. 1170. "me, I confess, when the pope avenges the
 "injuries of the church and my own." — He
 then spoke of the insults he had received, and
 of the many evils to which his own possessions
 and those of his friends had been exposed, since
 the reconciliation at Fretval. — "Had you
 "brought these complaints before your peers,"
 observed Reginald, interrupting him, "justice
 "had been done you." — "I have experienced
 "the contrary," replied Becket: But, Reginald;
 "you and more than two hundred knights were
 "present, when the king told me, I might
 "compel those to make satisfaction, by eccle-
 "siastical censures, who had disturbed the peace
 "of the church; nor can I longer dissemble the
 "proper discharge of my pastoral duties." — The
 knights sprang from the ground. "We heard
 "no such words," exclaimed they: "but these
 "are threats. Monks; we command you to
 "guard this man: if he escape, you shall
 "answer for him." — So saying, they went
 out; but Becket following them to the outward
 door; "I came not here to run away, gen-
 "tlemen," he called after them; "nor do I
 "value your threats." — "You shall find
 "something more than threats;" they answered,
 and departed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Gerv. Vita. c. 13, 14.

“It is wonderful,” said John of Salisbury, when they were gone, “that you will take no one’s advice. Why still more irritate those miscreants by your replies, and follow them to the door? We could have advised you better.”—“My resolution is taken,” answered the primate; “and I well know what I should do.”—“Heaven grant, it may be successful!” rejoined the secretary.

In the court of the palace, under a large mulberry-tree, the knights took off their outer garments, and appeared in armour; and having opened the door to the soldiers, they had brought with them, they all seized their arms, and again entered the palace. The arms the knights bore, were an axe in the left hand, to break through obstacles, if necessary, and in the right they brandished their naked swords. With much difficulty the primate had been prevailed on to leave his apartment: but the monks, whom his danger had alarmed, insisted on it; and as the evening-service had begun, they led him to the church. With a slow and reluctant step, he advanced through the cloisters, and entered by a side-door. All was confusion here. “Cowards,” said he to them, as they were barring the doors, “I forbid you to do it. I did not come here to resist, but to suffer.”

BOOK II. 1170. Scarcely had he said the words, when the assassins, who had not found him in the palace, came rushing through the cloisters, and entering the church, divided. The primate, mean while, had ascended a few steps towards the choir. — “Where is the traitor Becket?” exclaimed Reginald Fitzurfe; and as no answer was given: “Where is the archbishop?” he repeated in a louder tone. Becket turned his head, and coming down the steps, said: “Here I am. — “Reginald, I have done you many kindnesses; “and do you come to me thus armed?” — He seized the primate’s robe: “you shall know at “once,” said he. “Get out from hence, and “die.” — “I will not move:” replied the primate, drawing his robe from his hand. — “Then fly;” exclaimed the knight. — “Nor “that either;” observed Becket: “but if it is “my blood you want, I am ready to die, that “the church may obtain liberty and peace; “only, in the name of God, I forbid you to “hurt any of my people.”

Reginald retired to give a severer blow; and being joined by the other assassins, he struck with all his might: but Edward Grime, a clerk, interposing his arm, received the weight of the blow, and the archbishop was only wounded on the head. “Now strike:” exclaimed Regi-

nald.—Becket bowing his head, in a posture of prayer; “To God,” said he, “and the patrons of this place, I commend myself and the church’s cause.” They were his last words. Without a motion or a groan, in the same devout attitude, with his hands joined, he received a second stroke, and as the murderers multiplied their blows, he fell motionless at their feet. “He is dead,” said they, and went out¹⁰⁸.

BOOK

II.

1170.

Thus, in the fifty-third year of his age, died Thomas a Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, and primate of England.—Without incurring the imputation of a vain singularity, may I say, that the character of this man has never been fairly appreciated? When the catholic draws the portrait; all his virtues are emblazoned, and his blemishes are lost in the glare of light. They view him as a saint; and unfortunately so imposing has that character been rendered, that the essential stains of mortality are not allowed to rest upon it. Since the recent date of the reformation, it should seem, that the moral order of things has been inverted. Some virtues lost their name; and what had been religious, exemplary, and perfect above the reach of unassisted nature,

His character.

¹⁰⁸ Gerv. Chron. et Act. Pont. Hoveden. Vit. c. 15, 16, 17, 18.

BOOK II.
1179. ceased to be so. The protestant then seized the pencil, and viewing Becket, drew a portrait, on which were seen no lines of former beauty. On both sides, is much partial judgment. The ancient historians, I know, who lie before me, wrote with too warm an impression. The glare of miracles, they thought, was flashing round them; and the praises of Rome and of Europe echoed in their ears. It is an *apotheosis* which they celebrate. But because this is too much; can we sit down with too little, and say that we are just?

With some enthusiasm on my mind, I confess, I have described the conduct of Becket. Every where I saw him great as other men, and on some occasions, I saw him greater. Real excellence there may be; but it is, by comparing only, that we judge. By his side, the contemporary men of the day, the greatest the era could produce, in church or state, lose all their splendor. Alexander is an irresolute and timid politician: the prelates of England, basely deserting a cause, which their own consciences held sacred, are courtly sycophants, and excite contempt: the sacred college of cardinals, bribed by gold, forget their dignity, and bartering away the privileges of the Roman see, publicly put up their venality, and become the shame of

christendom: Henry, the lord of many people, whom Europe then admired, and whom posterity has called the greatest of English kings, through the quarrel which himself provoked, is wayward, vindictive, timorous, and deceptious, never showing one exertion which became a king, and ever indulging a train of affections, which would have disgraced his lowest vassal: Becket, from the beginning, is firm, dauntless, composed, and manly; like a deep and majestic river, he proceeds even in his course, hardly ruffled by rocks of opposition, and true to the level he had taken.

His endowments from nature were great, and he had given to them such cultivation, as the state of the times permitted. It would have been well, perhaps, had he never seen Bologna, and imbibed from its masters those maxims of church-dominion, which, though the age held them sacred, were to him the occasion of an unfortunate controversy, and to others brought much affliction. Early in life, he was engaged in business, which made him an able negociator; and the favor of his prince, which soon followed, raised him to uncommon greatness. But the unbounded confidence he enjoyed, was all used to ennoble the source from which it flowed. He did not enrich himself, his family, or his retainers. All was

BOOK II. 1170. Henry's. His influence he employed to gain him friends, and to spread his interest; and when he displayed a munificence, more than royal, it was his master's fame he looked to. The love of pleasure, which in a dissipated court, can make the stoutest virtue tremble, passed over his senses, as a gentle gale. There was a sternness in his character, which would not bend to affections that enervate; and it is remarkable, that, even when his enemies were most numerous and malevolent, they never charged him with a single vice. His ruling passions were the passions of a great mind, such as, when circumstances favor, lead men to the achievements of patriots and of heroes; and had providence given Becket to his country, but a few years later, we should have seen him, opposing with main fortitude the wild pretensions of Rome, and at the head of the barons, wresting *Magna Charta* from the tyrant son of Henry. On some occasions, I think, he was too acrid in his expressions, and too unyielding in his conduct; but when we weigh his provocations and the incessant stress of low opposition, wonder we cannot, and we may easily forgive. His private virtues were amiable. They endeared him to Henry, who loved him with a brother's love; nor were they soured, it seems, by adverse fortune. They made him many friends; and John

of Salisbury, his secretary and companion, then describes him best, when he checks his impetuosity, and chides his too caustic humor, and does not give offence.

BOOK
II.
1170.

With regard to the controversy itself, he only is competent to judge, who can transport himself back to the times I have described. The privileges of the church, deemed sacred, and by a selfish policy, too much, at all times, confounded with those of religion, were immediately connected with it. To require that Becket, on this head, should not have had the notions, which christian Europe then had, is absurd; and to require that, from any worldly motive, he should have relinquished them, is to think basely of human nature. I read in all his letters the strongest conviction of the magnitude and holy import of his cause. By the force of what casuistry, then, could he have acted than as he did? The favor of his prince, the allurements of patronage, the vast power of Canterbury with its wealth, and the endearing ties of his country, he sacrificed. In the gratification of a ruling passion, I know, all that is not connected with it, weighs as does a feather; but, in the situation, he left, was there not a wider scope for action, than in exile, in the retirement of Pontigny, or in the depend-

BOOK II. ence, even for bread, on the precarious bounty of another?

1170.

Religion, I think, through life, gave energy to his conduct. I speak of religion as he viewed it, not always, perhaps, clear from every misconception in theory, or in practice, always uninfluenced by human failings. To read its divine maxims, with an unerring precision, and to be guided in all things, by them alone, has been of some minds, I believe, the noble ardor: but the best wishes of the heart are clogged by the connate weaknesses of our being. — There was a time, when the virtues which best become a churchman, stood not foremost, it is true, in the life of Becket. That time I marked. But Theobald, his patron and his guide, had then given him to Henry, and told him to be his companion in the cabinet, in the court, in the camp, and in the sports of the field. The old man's views were upright. Appointed to a higher charge, with which those occupations could not accord, even as a misjudging age beheld it, with a becoming fortitude, he broke from every engagement, and became the shepherd of his flock. Courtiers, he knew, and men of earthly minds, would charge him with ingratitude, and with motives even of ambition. He spurned the malevolent imputation, and as the duties of his

station directed, steadily pursued his choice. BOOK
 What benefits England might have drawn from II.
 his exertions, in the promotion of virtue and 1179.
 the suppression of vice, the troubles which soon
 followed, did not permit her to experience. To
 good men the prospect had been flattering. —
 Through the trying years of prosecution, religion,
 doubtless, often aided his resolution; and when
 he exceeded, let it be remembered, that the
 conviction of his mind, and the patronage of
 many, had then given an enthusiasm to his
 cause. — He practised abstemiousness and other
 penitential rigors. These, I know, are an
 equivocal sign of virtue; but when they are done
 in secret, or are known only to a few, he,
 truly, must be an unequitable man, who will
 ascribe them to other motives, than those of
 piety and self-abasement.

Give me the greatest heroes, whom ancient
 times did deify, or such, as a more temperate
 posterity had registered on the lists of fame, and
 I will say, that Becket, when he closed his life,
 was full as great as they. All his native energy
 then collected at the heart; and seeing the heavens,
 as he thought, opened to him, he fell, as blessed
 martyrs had done.

BOOK II. 170. In a word, he had blemishes, and he had many virtues: his cause, which to us wears few marks of christian truth, to him was sacred, and he defended it sincerely: but if many catholics have praised him immoderately; why, shall protestants be unjust? True it is,

Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues

We write in water.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

Berington, Joseph, 1746-1827

The History Of The Reign Of Henry The Second, And Of Richard and John, his
Sons With the Events of the Period, from 1154 to 1216. In which the
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